NATION

HC raps cops, civic body for no solution on illegal vendors

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Market settles lower ahead of Budget

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Gambhir backs Rohit, Kohli to play 2027 World Cup

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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STATE CABINET CLEARS BILL TO REPLACE NEET IN K'TAKA

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Karnataka Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, has approved a bill to abolish the NEET exam in the State, in response to the growing discontent over the integrity of the examinations. This decision was taken during the State Cabinet meeting on Monday. The new bill proposes to replace NEET with an alternative medical entrance examination or incorporate it into the State's Common Entrance Test (CET). This shift would allow Karnataka to revert to admitting students to medical colleges based on their Class 12 marks, a practice followed before NEET's inception.

This initiative comes amid escalating concerns over irregularities in the NEET-UG 2024 exams, including incidents of paper leaks. If the bill is passed by the Karnataka Assembly, the State will independently manage the admissions for undergraduate and postgraduate medical courses.

Last month, Tamil Nadu, under the leadership of the DMK, passed a similar resolution and urged the Central government to let states handle medical admissions autonomously. Various regional political parties supported Tamil Nadu's resolution, emphasising the need for a fairer admission process. "Tamil Nadu has been consistently saying that we do not want NEET. Now it is proved that NEET is not a fair examination, and students are losing so much because of NEET," said MP K Kanimozhi. "We want NEET to be abolished. We have passed a resolution in our Assembly, and it is still pending with the President for signature." The NEET-UG 2024, conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on 5 May, saw over 23 lakh candidates appearing at 4,750 centres, including 14 cities abroad. Despite 67 candidates achieving perfect scores, the exam faced widespread protests over fairness and transparency. The High-level Committee on Simultaneous Elections constituted under the chairmanship of Former President Ram Nath Kovind had submitted its report on 'One Nation, One Election' to President Droupadi Murmu in March.

—Salar News

Narayanswamy is Leader of Oppn in Council

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Bengaluru, 22 July BJP MLC Chalawadi Narayanswamy has been appointed as the Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Council. The post was vacant after Kota Srinivas Poojary got elected to the Lok Sabha. Previously a leader of the Congress, he had joined the BJP ahead of Assembly elections in 2018. He was later appointed the president of Karnataka BJP SC Morcha.

—Salar News

Kamala vows to win nomination, defeat Trump

WASHINGTON, 22 JULY

Kamala Harris has said she plans to "earn and win" the Democratic presidential nomination to defeat Donald Trump after President Joe Biden decided not to seek re-election, putting her on the path to become the first Black woman and first Asian American to lead a major political party's ticket. Vice President Harris, 59, said she was "honoured" to receive Biden's endorsement and voiced her appreciation for his extraordinary leadership as President of the United States and his decades of service. "I am honoured to have the President's endorsement and my intention is to earn and win this nomination," she said.*—PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

SC gives bail to Ashish in Lakhimpur Kheri case

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday gave bail to former Union minister Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra in the case related to the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence that claimed eight lives, and restricted his movement to Delhi or Lucknow. On 25 January last year, the top court had given Ashish Mishra interim bail in the "unfortunate ghastly incident". A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan also granted bail to four farmers -- Guruwinder Singh, Kamaljeet Singh, Gurupreet Singh and Vichitra Singh -- in the case and directed the trial court to expedite hearing. On 3 October, 2021, eight people, including four farmers, were killed in Tikunia in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri.*—PTI*

Suraj Revanna gets conditional bail in sexual abuse case

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

A Bengaluru court on Monday granted conditional bail to JD(S) MLC Suraj Revanna in a sexual abuse case. Revanna was arrested by Hassan police last month for allegedly sexually assaulting a 27-year-old man, a JD(S) worker. The case was then handed over by the State government to the CID for further probe. Suraj is brother of former MP Prajwal Revanna who is facing charges of rape in three cases and accused of sexually abusing several women. The 27-year-old man had complained to the police that Suraj, the eldest son of Holenarasipura MLA HD Revanna, sexually abused him at his farmhouse in Ghannikada on 16 June. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Eco survey pitches for China FDI

It raises concerns on rising speculation in stock market ahead of Budget today

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The government's pre-Budget Economic Survey on Monday set a conservative growth forecast of 6.5 to 7 per cent for the current fiscal as it flagged the need for creating more jobs in the economy and backed more Chinese direct investments to boost exports.

The report, which is authored by the chief economic adviser's office, favoured considering targeting inflation that excludes food, the prices of which are influenced more by supply than demand.

It sounded a bell of caution on the soaring stock markets, saying retail investor participation has increased significantly and there are chances of speculations due to overconfidence and expectations of greater returns.

The Survey, tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament, acknowledged that this year's forecast was on the conservative side, and lower than market expectations. The Survey cited slower investment growth by the private sector as well as uncertain weather patterns as some of the reasons for caution. The report, came just a day before Sitharaman presents the Budget for 2024-25. Priorities should also include bridging the gap between education and employment, it said, calling for expediting implementation of labour reforms to create a more conducive environment for job creation.

"The economy needs to generate an average of nearly 7.85 million jobs annually until 2030 in the non-farm sector to cater to the rising workforce," the report said. The Survey called for boosting direct investment from China while reducing imports from that country.

Amid strained ties since 2020 after border skirmishes, the report said to boost exports, India can either integrate into China's supply chain or promote foreign direct investment from China. On inflation, it said the short-term inflation outlook is benign. It favoured the Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy framework, considering to tame inflation excluding food and using it to set interest rates. Currently, the central bank is mandated to keep consumer price index-based inflation at 4 per cent with a tolerance band of 2 percentage points on either side. It also flagged a rise in mental health issues among Indians, saying it drags down productivity and needs to be paid attention to.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

HIGHLIGHTS OF SURVEY

- Projects economic growth at 6.5-7% in FY25 versus 8.2% in 2023-24
- AI casts uncertainty over the impact on workers across all skill levels
- FDI inflows from China can boost India's global supply chain, exports
- India needs to generate 78.5 lakh jobs in non-farm sector annually till 2030
- 54% of disease burden due to unhealthy diets; need transition towards balanced diet
- Remittances to grow at 3.7% to $124B, 4% in 2025 to reach $129B
- Heavy lifting on the domestic front must for post-pandemic recovery
- Higher food price issue can be handled via direct benefit transfers

"The Survey highlights the prevailing strengths of our economy and also showcases the outcomes of the various reforms our Government has brought. It also identifies areas for further growth
-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

DRIVERS IRKED BY GPS PANIC BUTTON TO PROTEST TODAY

UDUPI, 22 JULY

The Udupi taximen and maxicab association is up in arms against the State government's mandate to install GPS and panic button devices in tourist vehicles.

According to the association's General Secretary Ramesh K Kotian, taxi drivers and owners are burdened by the high cost of these devices, which are now compulsory. The Union government has set a fixed price of Rs 7,550 for installing both GPS and panic buttons. However, at the Regional Transport Office (RTO) offices, these devices are being sold for as much as Rs 15,000. This steep price difference has left taxi drivers feeling unfairly treated.

In response, the association has planned to stage a protest near the Deputy Commissioner's office in Rajathadri on 23 July. Their demand is clear: Reconsider the mandatory installation of these devices. *—PTI*

K'taka bill bats for new B'luru governance body

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024, was tabled in State Legislature on Monday and it is likely to be taken up for discussion on Tuesday.

The draft was prepared by Brand Bengaluru Committee and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar tabled the bill.

The proposed legislation aims to overhaul Bengaluru's governance structure by introducing a three-tier model and Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will serve as its apex body. It suggests a modular approach to governance, creating between 1 and 10 municipal corporations at the second tier and accommodating up to 400 wards at the third tier. GBA, chaired by Chief Minister, will oversee the administration and strategic planning.

GBA will be coordinated by the Bengaluru Development Minister and will include four additional ministers, all City MLAs, and the heads of key city agencies such as the Bangalore Development Authority, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board, Bangalore Electricity Supply Company, Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited, and Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation.

Two more bills — Karnataka Irrigation (Amendment) Bill and Karnataka Municipalities and Certain Other Law (Amendment) Bill — were tabled on Monday. Tabled by Shivakumar, the irrigation bill proposes a fine of Rs 2 lakh, up from Rs 1,000 earlier, and imprisonment of up to two years, up from one year earlier, for siphoning off water from irrigation canals.

Introduced by Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh, the municipalities' bill has provisions to levy a penalty on officers. "Any officer or employee of the municipality who fails to collect property tax dues under assessment of property tax or any financial causes to the municipality, shall be fined up to Rs 50,000 in each case and may also be punished with simple imprisonment for 15 days," according to the bill. *—PTI*

DK Shivakumar *PHOTO: PTI*

- Two more bills — Karnataka Irrigation (Amendment) Bill and Karnataka Municipalities and Certain Other Law (Amendment) Bill — were tabled on Monday.

2 ED babus booked for coercing official

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

In a major twist in the Rs 187 crore Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribe Development Corporation scam, a case was registered on Monday against two Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials for pressuring a State government officer to "frame" Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the Finance Department.

According to the FIR report (in possession of Salar News) filed by Halasuru Gate police, ED officials Mittal and Muruli Kannan pressurised the complaint Kallesh to give statements naming Chief Minister and other ministers in the alleged scam.

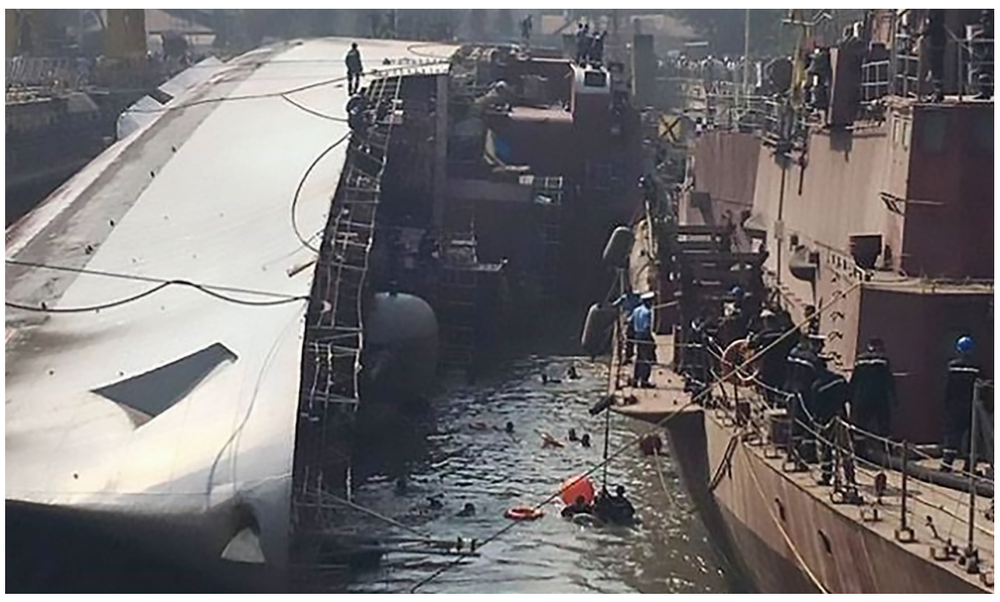
Kallesh said that during questioning on 16 July, Kannan asked him 17 questions and he replied to them promptly. He alleged that Kannan asked him to name former minister B Nagendra, "the highest authority" (referring apparently to Siddaramaiah) and the Finance Department.

Further, Kallesh said that Mittal allegedly threatened to frame him in the case and said that if he wanted the ED to help him, he should name the Chief minister, Nagendra and the Finance Department.

The complainant claimed that although he was not involved in the crime, he was summoned and threatened, and told to give in writing that the chief minister, the former minister and the Finance Department officials were involved in it. *—Salar News*

Siddaramaiah *PHOTO: PTI*

UP IN FLAMES



A sailor is missing after fire broke out aboard the Navy's multi-role frigate INS Brahmaputra in Mumbai dockyard on 21 July. The ship is now resting on the side after a fire broke out on board while it was undergoing refit at Mumbai's Naval Dockyard *PHOTO: PTI*

CENTRE RULES OUT SPECIAL STATUS TO BIHAR

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Centre on Monday ruled out any plan to give a special category status to Bihar, a core demand by its key ally, the Janata Dal (United).

The government an inter-ministerial group report prepared in 2012 to assert that a case for granting special category status to Bihar is not made out.. Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said special category status was granted in the past by the National Development Council (NDC) to some states, which were characterised by a number of features necessitating special consideration. A state with a special category status gets more funding support from the Central in the Union government's schemes. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

MOITRA AMONG PETITIONERS

SC stays UP Kanwar Yatra order over hotel owners' name tags

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Supreme Court on Monday ordered an interim stay on the directives issued by BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand asking eateries along Kanwar Yatra routes to display the names of their owners, staff and other details, a move Opposition has claimed is intended to promote religious discrimination.

The top court was hearing a batch of pleas including those by TMC MP Mahua Moitra, academician Apoorvanand Jha and columnist Aakar Patel, and NGO Association of Protection of Civil Rights challenging the directives.

Issuing notice to the governments of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh, where Ujjain municipal body has issued a similar directive, a bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti, however, said eateries may be required to display the kind of food they are serving like they are vegetarian or non-vegetarian. No one appeared for the state governments in the apex court on Monday.

Meanwhile, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday rejected notices from opposition MPs calling for discussion on an Uttar Pradesh government order asking shops along the Kanwar Yatra route to display names of their owners and staff. The BJP government in Madhya Pradesh has said it has not issued any instructions requiring shop owners to display their names along the Kanwar Yatra route in the state, and there is no such compulsion. A large number of devotees travel with 'kanwars' carrying holy water from Ganga to perform 'jal-abhishek' of Shivlings during the Hindu calendar month of 'Shravan'. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Kanwariyas walk past a shop on which banners with shopkeeper's name was put up on Kanwar Marg in Uttar Pradesh *PHOTO: PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

City driving school shut after trainer's lewd behaviour

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

The State Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy has issued a notice to a driving school at Basaveshwaranagar following the arrest of one of its instructors for allegedly misbehaving with a girl student on 14 July. The instructor, Annappa, was arrested on charges of masturbating while sitting next to the girl. According to the press release, "We have instructed the driving school to shut down and we have seized the licence of the school. We also have seized the driver's licence to prevent such incidents from happening. The driving school will have to follow the code of conduct." According to the police, the victim, who had recently completed her Pre-University education, had enrolled in the driving school and completed her course. The victim had begun her additional lessons using her father's car. Following a complaint filed by the victim's family, the police initiated a manhunt and successfully tracked down and arrested Annappa, who was on the run. *—Salar News*

Woman to get Rs 5L after needle left in her body

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

A Bengaluru-based woman has been awarded a compensation of Rs 5 lakh by a consumer forum, nearly 20 years after a 3.2cm surgical needle was left in her body following her surgery at a private hospital here. The Karnataka State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has directed the hospital and two doctors to pay Padmavathi, a resident of Jayanagar, Rs 50,000 as litigation expenses. The then 32-year-old woman underwent the surgery on 29 September, 2004 at the Deepak Hospital, with the two doctors allegedly performing the hernia operation. On completion of the surgery, her appendix was also removed. Immediately, on the next day, she complained of severe pain for which she was prescribed some pain killers and assured that it is post-surgery discomfort and that it will get cured. She suffered acute stomach and back pain for several years and was also admitted in the same hospital twice later, the order noted. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X@NEERAJPATIL

NRI doctor from Kalaburagi elected to UK council

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

NRI Dr Neeraj Patil—who hails from Kalaburagi—has been appointed to National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Labour Party, the governing party of the United Kingdom. The NEC, similar to Congress Working Committee and BJP's Parliamentary Board, is responsible for shaping the party's strategy and policies. Dr Patil studied medicine at MR Medical College in Kalaburagi and bagged three postgraduate degrees in emergency medicine in the UK. His uncle Subash Patil and grandfather Shaker Shetty Patil are former Kalaburagi MLAs. He moved to the UK in 1994 and worked in the National Health Service. He served as a councillor and mayor on Lambeth Council and played a key role in installing the Basaveshwara statue in London, the only statue of the 12th-century social reformer outside India. Earlier, he was appointed Chair of Hindus for Labour, an officially recognised organisation by the Labour Party that aims to connect British Hindu voters with the Labour Party. *—Salar News*

Dams filled to the brim due to torrential rains

Inflow of water in Cauvery basin was 98,577 cusecs while outflow was 70,645 cusecs

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Most of the dams in State are filled to the brim, thanks to the torrential rains in the catchment areas of the major rivers for the past few days.

The coastal and Malnad region in the Western Ghats have been receiving incessant rains for the past 15 days due to which many rivers originating from here are in spate.

According to the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC), the inflow of water in the Cauvery basin was 98,577 cusecs while the outflow was 70,645 cusecs.

The KSNDMC said the cumulative outflow since 1 June, was 118.25 thousand million cubic (TMC) feet, while the outflow was 41.52 TMC ft.

KRS dam with a reservoir level of 124 ft presently has 123.2 ft water.

Other dams in the Cauvery basin namely Harangi, Hemavathi and Kabini are also filled to the brim.

The rains in the Cauvery basin have been received at a time when State was worried with the scanty rainfall and was gearing up for a legal battle with neighbouring Tamil Nadu.

KRS dam with a reservoir level of 124 ft has 123.2 ft water PHOTO: PTI

The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee had directed Karnataka to release one TMC ft water to neighbouring Tamil Nadu till July-end.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said the CWRC had directed the State to release 20 TMC water starting from 11 July till month-end.

He also said that 51,000 cusecs water is being released to Tamil Nadu.

In a normal year, we have to release 40.14 TMC ft of water. Karnataka will be able to release the requisite water to Tamil Nadu, Shivakumar said.

Dams in the Krishna river basin namely Bhadra, Tungabhadra, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, Almatti and Narayanapura are almost filled up and water is being released from these dams.

These six dams have a gross capacity of 422.45 TMC while on Monday there was a storage of 312.96 TMC. Last year, the storage was 129.59 TMC water on this day.

Three hydel project dams Linganamakki, Supa and Varahi and Vani Vilas Sagar too are completely filled up.

The major dams in State with a gross water holding capacity of 895.62 TMC have gross storage of 615.20 TMC.

Last year when the state witnessed an unprecedented drought where 223 out of 236 Taluks were declared drought hit, these dams had 300.95 TMC water. *—PTI*

Govt mulls UP like 'Cauvery Aarti' at KRS

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

DK Shivakumar PHOTO: PTI

The State government has announced a Cauvery Aarti programme which will be held in the KRS reservoir similar to the famous Ganga Aarti in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

This initiative aims to celebrate and honour the river, reflecting the cultural and spiritual heritage of Karnataka. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said, "The government is set for the Cauvery Aarti programme as I have instructed the Religious Endowment Department and the Cauvery Neeravari Nigama will jointly conduct the programme."

During his visit to the KRS reservoir in Srirangapatna taluk of Mandya district, he said a team of 25 experts would design and organise the event. The programme will commence once the team provides its report.

In addition to the Aarti, the Deputy Chief Minister announced plans to develop the Cauvery Brindavan Amusement Park.

Shivakumar said, "This proposal will come up before the Cabinet in a couple of days. This project will create 8,000-10,000 jobs for the locals. We will arrange for people to stay in the amusement park itself." *—Salar News*

'Govt can't find land for public utilities'

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda on Monday said having granted lands for various purposes over the years, State government is now struggling to find space to locate new cemeteries, playgrounds, hospitals and other public services.

"The government spent Rs 50 crore last year to buy land for burial grounds, but we are still facing a shortage," Gowda said during Legislative Session on Monday.

The minister said the land scarcity affects various public needs. "We are short on land for playgrounds, Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation stations, hospitals, schools, and more. Currently, I have 12,000 pending cases for land allocation for anganwadis, but there is no land available," he said.

Gowda pointed out that the rising cost of land is a significant challenge. "We need to save land for future use. Either the land has been encroached upon by individuals or organizations, or it is being used for different purposes," he said.

The department officials said many lands have been encroached upon under the guise of farming, including hilltops, lakesides and forest areas. "Vacating these lands is challenging because if we do so, we are branded as anti-farmer. However, many of these individuals are not farmers but encroachers," an official with the department said.

To address this issue, Gowda mentioned the development of an app called Dishank to track and manage government property details. "The department has introduced a beat system requiring village accountants to visit sites and report any encroachments," he said.

Currently, Karnataka has around 63.32 lakh acres of government land, of which 14.72 lakh acres are encroached upon. *— Salar News*

CM Siddaramaiah with Home Minister G Parameshwara and others during an Assembly session at Vidhana Soudha PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Suraj Revanna gets conditional bail

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

A Bengaluru court on Monday granted conditional bail to JD(S) MLC Suraj Revanna in a sexual abuse case.

Revanna was arrested by Hassan police last month for allegedly sexually assaulting a 27-year-old man, a JD(S) worker.

The case was then handed over by the State government to the CID for further probe.

Suraj is brother of former MP Prajwal Revanna who is facing charges of rape in three cases and accused of sexually abusing several women.

The 27-year-old man had complained to the police that Suraj, the eldest son of Holenarasipura MLA HD Revanna, sexually abused him at his farmhouse in Ghannikada on 16 June.

Suraj, the grandson of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda and nephew of Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, has categorically denied the charge.

Suraj Revanna PHOTO: FB

The court has set multiple bail conditions on Suraj including: not to threaten and tamper with the prosecution witnesses or the complainant and victim and not to evade the investigation. He shall appear before the investigating officer whenever called by him for the purpose of investigation, furnish his passport to the Court and not leave the State without obtaining written permission from the Court.

Also, he shall not in any manner contact the victim directly or indirectly, he shall appear before the investigating officer on every second Sunday of the month and mark his attendance between 9am to 5pm for a period of six months or till the filing of charge sheet, whichever is earlier, and he shall not indulge in similar offence. *—PTI*

VALMIKI SCAM

BJP stops protests, walks out from Assembly session

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

BJP leaders on Monday withdrew their protest in the Assembly over the alleged Valmiki Development Corporation scam and staged a walkout.

However, they intensified their demands for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's resignation.

Opposition Leader R Ashoka criticised Siddaramaiah for not providing a satisfactory response to the allegations.

He also alleged that under Congress government a transfer racket is going on in the Excise Department.

He said, "In Excise Department, bribery is fixed from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 3.5 crore from constable to deputy commissioner post."

During the protest, members of the ruling party objected to Ashoka's remarks, leading to a commotion in the Assembly. Ashoka later announced the withdrawal of the dharna, stating, "There should be a discussion on rain damage, dengue, and the MUDA scam. Hence, we will withdraw the dharna. However, our fight over the Valmiki scam will continue."

Following this, all BJP members walked out from the Assembly. *—Salar News*

BJP MLAs protest during the Karnataka Assembly session, at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru PHOTO: PTI

Nagendra sent to 14-day judicial custody

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

A special court here on Monday remanded former minister B Nagendra to 14 days judicial custody in a money laundering probe linked to alleged irregularities in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Limited.

The Ballari Rural Congress MLA was produced before the court as his Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody ended today. The federal probe agency did not seek further custody.

The ED arrested Nagendra on July 12 in connection with the case after questioning him.

Following allegations against him, Nagendra, resigned on 6 June. *—PTI*

Government to issue attire guidelines for malls: DKS

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday said the government will issue guidelines to malls and other establishments, in the wake of a farmer in dhoti being denied entry because of his attire.

The government on 18 July ordered closure of the GT World mall here for seven days after the incident, which drew strong condemnation from members cutting across party lines in the Legislative Assembly.

JD(S) floor leader CB Suresh Babu requested the Deputy Chief Minister to bring private clubs too under the guidelines. Intervening, Law Minister HK Patil said

- Law Minister HK Patil requested Shivakumar not to include clubs and bars under these guildelines

Shivakumar's statement was regarding a specific incident, and requested him not to include clubs and bars

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka welcomed the government's plans to issue guidelines through a circular, but said, "While giving licence, include the guidelines in that -- those wearing traditional village attire should not be harassed. If it is included in the license it will be helpful, as the licence will be kept permanently," he said. *—PTI*

TRUCKERS PROTEST AT LANDSLIDE SITE

The truck drivers stranded for a week due to a landslide-induced road blockage on National Highway 66 in Uttara Kannada staged a protest on Monday, demanding immediate passage after the road was partially cleared. A massive landslide in Shirur village that occurred on 16 July claimed seven lives and has caused significant distress for truck drivers and travellers, leaving the road impassable and many people stranded. One side of the road has been partially cleared but authorities have not yet permitted drivers to proceed. *—PTI*

LABOUR MINISTER SAYS

'IT firm pressuring govt to extend work hrs'

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Labour Minister Santosh Lad on Monday said the proposal to extend the working hours of employees in the IT/ITeS/ BPO sector has come from the IT industry.

He said the government will take a decision after looking into opinions shared by all stakeholders including leaders in the field and employees.

Stating that the IT employees union has expressed their dissent, he urged industry veterans and captains to also come out and share their views.

The proposed 'Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishments (Amendment) Bill 2024' seeks to normalise a 14-hour work day.

The existing act only allows a maximum of 10 hours work per day including overtime.

Karnataka Minister for Labour Santosh Lad PHOTO: X@SANTOSHSLADINC

Karnataka State IT/ITeS Employees' Union (KITU) that has urged the Siddaramaiah-led government to reconsider the plans, opposing the proposed amendment which, it said, poses an "attack on the basic right of any worker to have a personal life."

This amendment will allow the companies to go for a two shift system instead of the currently existing three, and one third of the workforce will be thrown out from their employment, it claimed.

- The proposed 'Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishments (Amendment) Bill 2024' seeks to normalise a 14-hour work day

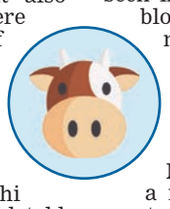
State BJP President BY Vijayendra said the Congress government in Karnataka has not only made a mockery of themselves but is "leaving no stone unturned to destroy everything in its way." *—PTI*

Stray cattle endanger City's motorists

BENGALURU, 22 JULY

Stray cattle have become a persistent hazard on Bengaluru's roads, posing a danger to both motorists and pedestrians.

"These stray animals not only block traffic but also cause accidents. There have been instances of vehicles swerving to avoid hitting cattle, leading to collisions," said Akarsh Umashankar S, a working professional and a resident of Gandhi Nagar, Kanakapura Road, told **Salar News.**



"Many times, I had to apply sudden brakes, resulting in sudden disruptions on busy roads. We've informed the authorities about the issue and hope for a swift resolution," said Dinesh S, a resident of JP Nagar, 2nd phase. The menace is rampant in areas such as Yeswanthpur, Basavanagudi, Banashankari, KR Market and Agara Cross on Kanakapura Road. Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries has been impounding stray cattle blocking the roads and moving them to the cattle pound on JC Road in Kalasipalya which can accommodate 60-70 adult bovines. Speaking to **Salar News**, Rudresh Prasad, a member of the department, said: "We receive 4-5 calls daily about stray cattle on the road. After impounding the cattle, we check if they are tagged and identify their owners. Owners who claim their cattle must pay a penalty of Rs 2,500 for a calf or Rs 3,500 for an adult." *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Army foils terrorist attack bid in J&K; search ops on

RAJOUTI, 22 JULY

Army troops foiled a terrorist attack on a security post in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district early on Monday and launched a cordon and search operation to track them down, officials said. The terrorists fired at an Army post in the Gundha area of Rajouri district at 4 am, and troops guarding the post retaliated, resulting in fierce exchanges, an Army spokesperson said. The troops foiled the attack, following which a cordon and search operation was launched by security forces in the area, the spokesperson added. Unconfirmed reports said a jawan and a civilian suffered injury in the attack. However, a fresh firing between terrorists and security forces has broken out in the area, while the cordon and search operation is underway. *—PTI*

Oppn walks out during Governor's address in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR, 22 JULY

The first session of the 17th Odisha Assembly started on a stormy note with both the Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Congress boycotting Governor Raghubar Das's address to the House on Monday over alleged inaction against his son despite allegations of him assaulting an official at the Puri Raj Bhavan. As soon as the House assembled, Leader of Opposition and BJD president Naveen Patnaik led a walkout of the party lawmakers. The BJD members were followed by Congress MLAs who also staged a walkout led by its legislature party leader Rama Chandra Kadam. The Congress said Odia 'asmita' (pride) was hurt as the official, who is an Odia, was allegedly assaulted by the Governor's son, who is a non-Odia. *—PTI*

National Herald: HC asks BJP, Cong to file written plea

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Delhi High Court asked BJP leader Subramanian Swamy and Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi to file a short note on the submissions in the National Herald case. Justice Neena Bansal Krishna directed them to file the written note on the arguments within four weeks and said thereafter, the written submissions will be accepted with costs of Rs 15,000. The court listed the matter for arguments on 29 October. The High Court was hearing a plea moved by Swamy seeking to lead evidence before the trial court in the National Herald case, in which the Gandhis and others are accused. *—PTI*

Farmers to hold tractor marches on 15 August

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha on Monday said they will burn effigies of the BJP on 1 August and hold tractor marches across the country on 15 August over farmers' demands, including a legal guarantee of MSP for crops. Addressing a press conference, Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) leader Sarvan Singh Pandher said the farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' march will complete 200 days on 31 August and appealed to people to reach Khanauri and Shambhu points on the Punjab and Haryana border. Farmers from Punjab led by SKM and KMM began the 'Delhi Chalo' march to Delhi on 13 February to demand MSP for crops, but were stopped by Haryana Police, who had set up barricades, including cemented blocks, on the Ambala-New Delhi national highway. *—PTI*

Exam system flawed: RaGa

Ed Minister says no proof of paper leaks in last 7 years

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday led the opposition attack on the government over the exam paper leak issue in Lok Sabha, saying there is a very serious problem in the country's exam system and that Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has blamed everybody except himself for it.

Under Opposition fire, Pradhan said that he was "here at the mercy of my leader, the Prime Minister" and that his government is collectively answerable.

The Minister also asserted that there has been no evidence of paper leaks in the last seven years.

As the Opposition sought to corner the government on the issue of paper leaks, Speaker Om Birla said it is not right to raise questions about all exams and members should discuss on the need of developing a better examination system. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is probing alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam NEET and has lodged six FIRs. The NEET-UG is conducted by the National Testing Agency for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions. He said it is obvious that there is a very serious problem in the examination system, not just in NEET. "As this is a systemic issue, what exactly are you doing to fix this issue at the systemic level?" he asked Pradhan, who was responding to queries during Question Hour. *—PTI*

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi speaks in the House during the first day of the Parliament session on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

- Speaker Om Birla said it is not right to raise questions about all exams and members should discuss on the need of developing a better examination system

Attempt made to scuttle voice of PM: Modi to Oppn

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

PHOTO: PTI

Asserting that Parliament is not for 'dal' but for 'desh', Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hit out at the opposition, saying that some parties have practised "negative politics" and "misused" Parliament to hide their political failures.

Speaking with the media ahead of the start of Parliament session, Modi said the Union Budget, which will be presented on Tuesday, will set the direction for the journey of the next five years and lay the foundation for fulfilling the dream of 'Viksit Bharat' in 2047.

Modi said people have given their verdict in the Lok Sabha polls and now all political parties must fight together for the country for the next five years.

"I want to tell all MPs, they may be of any party, that from January onwards we fought a pitched electoral battle, we conveyed to the people what we wanted to convey, some showed the way while others misled, but that period is over now. The people have given their verdict," he said.

"Now it is the responsibility of all elected representatives and that of all political parties that we have fought for our respective parties and now for the next five years, we have to fight for the country and strive for it," Modi said.

The Prime Minister urged political parties to rise above party lines and make use of the platform of Parliament for the next four to four-and-a-half years. *—PTI*

AHEAD OF BUDGET

Congress demands legal guarantee for MSP from Centre

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

A day before the presentation of the Union budget, Congress on Monday said the Centre must make three important announcements of making Minimum Support Price (MSP) a legal guarantee, fix MSP on the basis of the Swaminathan formula and establish a permanent commission to monitor the implementation of farm loan waivers.

Congress general secretary in-charge Jairam Ramesh said that of all the "failures" of the Central government, the "incompetence and ill-will" of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is the most damaging.

"While the UPA had raised the MSP of wheat by 119 per cent and that of rice by 134 per cent, the Modi government has raised it by 47 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. This is not at all enough to keep up with inflation and the rising prices of agricultural inputs," Ramesh said.

He pointed out that farmers' debt has increased. "More than half of the farmers are debt-ridden. Since 2014, we have seen more than 1 lakh farmers die by suicide," Ramesh said. Ramesh also called for the establishment of a permanent commission to assess the need for, assess the magnitude of, and monitor the implementation of farm loan waivers. *—PTI*

SC asks IIT Delhi to set up panel for NEET-UG

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Director, IIT-Delhi to set up a team of three experts that would go into a particular question asked in the NEET-UG 2024 examination and submit a report on the correct answer by Tuesday noon.

The top court took note of the submissions of some aspirants that a question related to an "atom" and its characteristics had two correct answers and a set of examinees, who gave one particular answer out of the two correct ones, were awarded four marks. This, the petitioners contended before a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, would have a significant impact on the final merit list of successful candidates.

The bench said, "As indicated in the question as framed, of which students had to select one option as their answer. In order to resolve the issue as regards the correct answer, we are of the considered view that an expert opinion should be sought from IIT Delhi." *—PTI*

Over 170 contractual, outsourced staff at NTA, says MoE

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Over 170 employees at NTA are either contractual or outsourced staff, Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar said. He clarified that "all core activities involving setting up of question papers" for exams conducted by agency are not outsourced. He shared this information in response to a written question in the Lok Sabha by DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi. *—PTI*

Mamata trying to justify infiltration in Bengal, says BJP

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

BJP on Monday slammed West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her assertion that she is willing to shelter distressed people from Bangladesh, which is reeling under violent protests, as it accused her of justifying infiltration in the State.

BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said any attempt to weaken India's unity and integrity will not be tolerated as he hit out at Banerjee for her reported remarks that she wants Bengal to have good relations with India. What does she mean by it, he asked, noting that the State is a part of India.

Banerjee said in the wake of escalating violence in Bangladesh, she would keep the doors of her State open for people in distress from the neighbouring country and offer them shelter.

Prasad noted that such issues are entirely in the domain of the government of India and recalled that it was the Union government which took a call on sheltering Bangladeshis following the 1971 war.

The BJP leader accused Banerjee of trying to justify infiltration and changing the demography of West Bengal, claiming that the state used to have three Muslim-majority districts but the number has risen to nine. *—PTI*

Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav joined West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at flagship Martyrs' Day event of TMC on Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO: PTI

Lalu takes jibe at Nitish over denial of spl status to Bihar

PATNA, 22 JULY

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) supremo Lalu Prasad on Monday took a jibe at Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar after the Centre rejected Janata Dal (United)'s long-standing demand for special category status for the State.

Prasad criticised the chief minister, saying, "Nitish Kumar appears to have compromised Bihar's aspirations and the trust of its people for the sake of power. He had promised to secure special status for Bihar, but now that the Centre has denied it, he should resign."

The Central government on Monday cited an inter-ministerial group report prepared in 2012 to assert that a case for granting special category status to Bihar is not made out; a stand which came a day after BJP's allies from Bihar demanded the status for the backward State.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary elaborated that special category status had been historically granted by the National Development Council (NDC) to States with specific characteristics requiring special consideration. *—PTI*

The top court had said courts do not make policy decisions and it is for Parliament to decide on such issues **PHOTO: PTI**

SC junks plea on jailed politicians' virtual campaign

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday junked a plea seeking its direction for allowing arrested political leaders to campaign during elections virtually.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan refused to interfere with the Delhi High Court order which had dismissed the petition.

"This petition has been filed with mala fide intent. It is concentrated on one politician (Arvind Kejriwal) who is every day before this court with a battery of the best laywers.

"We do not deem it necessary to entertain this petition purportedly filed in public interest. Dismissed," the bench said.

Terming the petition as "highly adventurous" and against the fundamental principles of law, the top court had said courts do not make policy decisions and it is for Parliament to decide on such issues. *—PTI*

Too many mistakes, file again: HC on plea against Bansuri's win

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Monday pointed out several mistakes in AAP leader Somnath Bharti's petition challenging BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj's election in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls on grounds of alleged corrupt practices, and asked him to file a corrected one.

Justice Manmeet PS Arora said at the outset that there were a lot of typographical errors which made it difficult to understand the averments in the petition.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

The court gave Bharti 10 days to file a corrected petition and listed the matter for further hearing on 14 August.

Both Bharti and Swaraj contested from the New Delhi Lok Sabha seat.

While Bharti secured 3,74,815 votes, Swaraj got 4,53,185 votes as per the returning officer, the plea said.

The petition alleged corrupt practices by Swaraj, her election agent and other people.

The plea also alleged that former AAP minister Raaj Kumar Anand contested the election on a Bahujan Samaj Party ticket to help Swaraj by cutting into the vote share. Later, on 10 July, he joined the BJP, the plea said. *—PTI*

TWO INDIAS

Kanwariyas beat up people

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 22 JULY

A car was vandalised and its occupants thrashed by 'Kanwariyas' who claimed that it had brushed against them here on the Haridwar-Delhi national highway, police said Monday on the first day of the annual Kanwar Yatra.

The group of devotees claimed that a 'Kanwar' belonging to one of them had been rendered impure because the car had touched it near the Bajheri cut under the Chhapar area of the district late Sunday.

A police officer, however, said no Kanwariya came forward to confirm whether his Kanwar came in contact with the car.

The Yatra commenced on the first day of Sawan (Shravan) on Monday and will culminate on 2 August. *—PTI*

A group of people suspected to be Kanwar devotees vandalising a car on Haridwar-Delhi NH in Uttar Pradesh on Sunday night **PHOTO: VIDEOGRAB**

Muslims welcome Nuh devotees

NUH, 22 JULY

The Braj Mandal Jalabhishek Yatra that was marred by violence last year concluded peacefully on Monday as it passed through Nuh amid tight security arrangements, with members of both Hindu and Muslim communities welcoming the procession at different points.

Mahamandleshwar Swami Dharamdev said the yatra conveyed a powerful message of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood across the country.

Chanting "Har Har Mahadev" and "Jai Sri Ram", devotees started the yatra from Nalhar Mahadev Mandir and proceeded to Jhir Mandir in Ferozepur Jhirka here. Meanwhile, ahead of the yatra, tight security arrangements were made with deployment of over 2,000 security personnel. *—PTI*

Participants raise slogans during the Braj Mandal Jalabhishek Yatra after it began amid tight security arrangements in Nuh on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

3 dead in head-on bus collision in UP's Rampur

RAMPUR, 22 JULY

Three people died and about 49 passengers were injured in a head-on collision between a state bus and private bus in the Milak area here early Monday morning, police said. The accident took place on the Delhi-Bareilly national highway on the Kanwar Yatra route, they added. The private bus was going from Haridwar to Shravasti district, while the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation bus was going from Bareilly to Delhi, when both of them collided head-on, the police said. On being informed about the accident, District Magistrate (DM) Joginder Singh and Superintendent of Police (SP) Rampur Vidyasagar Mishra reached the spot. Singh said that all the injured people were admitted to the community health centre in Milak. *—PTI*

Ex-APSC chairman, 31 convicted in cash-for-jobs case

GUWAHATI, 22 JULY

A special court on Monday convicted former Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) chairman Rakesh Kumar Paul and 31 others in connection with a cash-for-jobs case related to the appointment of agricultural development officers (ADO) in Assam. Special Judge Dipankar Thakuria acquitted 11 others in connection with the case filed with the Bhangagarh police station here in 2017 for lack of evidence. Paul, along with two other members of the commission, Basanta Kumar Doley and Samedur Rehman, and other officials and middlemen were convicted. A candidate, who had failed to qualify for the job, had registered a complaint and a case was filed, alleging that the marks of another candidate had been increased in lieu of financial transactions. *—PTI*

Man trampled to death by elephants in Jharkhand

DHANBAD, 22 JULY

A 50-year-old man was trampled to death by a herd of elephants in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district, a forest official said on Monday. The incident occurred at Karmatand village in Topchachi area, around 200 km from Ranchi, around midnight when a herd of about 30 elephants entered the village, he said. The deceased is Gyanchandra Mahto. His body was sent for post-mortem. "After trampling the villager, the herd moved towards Giridih district," Dhanbad Division Forest Officer Vikash Paliwal said. He said the kin of the deceased was given a token compensation, and the entire ex gratia amount will be provided after completing the official procedure. *—PTI*

Smoke in train creates panic at Sambhal station

SAMBHAL, 22 JULY

Panic gripped the passengers of a train on its way to Delhi from Bareilly after they noticed a smoke-like substance emanating from one of its compartments at a railway station here, an official said on Monday. The incident took place at 8.10pm on Sunday and the train was halted at the Gumthal Railway Station for about half an hour, they said. Station master of Gumthal railway station, Vinod Sharma, said that someone had tampered with a fire extinguisher inside the coach, which started leaking. "The passengers mistook the fine mist leaking from the fire extinguisher for smoke and ran for safety, he said. The train that usually stops for just two minutes at the Gumthal station left after a delay of half an hour at 8.40 pm."Sharma said. *—PTI*

HC raps cops, civic body for no solution on illegal vendors

HC asks if stalls will be allowed outside governor's house

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

Bombay High Court on Monday came down heavily on the police and civic authorities for their inability to find a solution for the illegal hawking menace and asked if vendors would be allowed to put up stalls outside the Mantralaya or the governor's house.

A division bench of Justices MS Sonka and Kamal Khata said if the issue of illegal hawkers and vendors was a recurring problem, a permanent solution is required, and the authorities cannot claim to be helpless.

The court said there must be a stop, and it cannot keep recurring blatantly.

It also lamented the fact that the civic bodies and police authorities do not take any action on citizens' complaints against illegal and unauthorised hawkers and vendors.

"You (authorities) want citizens to come and sit in court every day? This is sheer harassment of people. This is complete lawlessness. The corporation does not look into citizens' complaints, and the police do not. What should a common man do?" the court said.

"Those who want to abide by the law suffer. The entire state machinery has collapsed. Brazenly, these unauthorised hawkers come. Let this happen in front of the Mantralaya or the governor's house, then see how all this stops. You have all the security there," the bench said.

The court lamented the fact that the civic bodies and police authorities do not take any action on citizens' complaints *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Last year, the High Court had taken suo motu (on its own) cognisance of the issue of illegal and unauthorised hawkers and vendors in the city. Last month, the court directed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the police to file a detailed affidavit about their action against illegal hawkers.

On Monday, BMC counsel Anil Singh and government pleader Purnima Kantharia, appearing for the police, sought more time to file their affidavits.

Irked by this, the bench said this was a serious matter, and if the authorities cannot follow court orders, then the court should just close.

In June, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee pulled up ministers, bureaucrats and police over encroachment on government land, and launched a drive in multiple towns and cities including Kolkata to free footpaths and evict other illegal occupants from government land. *—PTI*

POST BANGLADESH RIOTS

Indo-Bangla trade through WB land ports remains stalled

KOLKATA, 22 JULY

- BSF South Bengal Frontier has also set up special help desks at Integrated Check Posts along the border to ensure the safe return of students amidst the unrest in Bangladesh

Trade between India and Bangladesh via West Bengal's land ports remained suspended for the second consecutive day on Monday due to ongoing violence in the neighbouring country, although there was limited movement of passengers, officials said.

Goods trucks have not moved since Sunday with the Bangladeshi side of the Petrapole land port remaining non-functional due to a government-declared holiday, except for emergency services.

Petrapole, located in Bongaon in North 24 Parganas district, serves as South Asia's largest land port and plays a crucial role in facilitating trade between India and Bangladesh, with hundreds of trucks crossing daily under normal circumstances.

While trade remains stalled, passenger movement continued in low numbers.

So far, more than 4,500 Indian students have returned home from Bangladesh as the neighbouring country continues to reel under violent clashes that have killed over 100 people. The BSF South Bengal Frontier has also set up special help desks at Integrated Check Posts (ICP) along the border to ensure the safe return of students amidst the unrest in Bangladesh.

The last trade movement took place on Saturday with 110 trucks entering India from Bangladesh and 48 trucks leaving for the neighbouring country with exports. Currently, approximately 800 trucks loaded with merchandise are stranded in parking lots awaiting clearance to cross the border. *—PTI*

HC Judge recuses to hear Umar's plea

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Delhi High Court judge Justice Amit Sharma on Monday recused himself from hearing the bail plea of former JNU student Umar Khalid in a UAPA case related to the alleged larger conspiracy behind the riots here in February 2020.

The matter was listed for hearing before a division bench of Justice Prathiba M Singh and Justice Sharma. This has to go before another bench, Justice Singh said.

Khalid, who was arrested by the Delhi Police in September 2020, has assailed a recent trial court order refusing to grant him bail in the case.

Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, and several others have been booked under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and provisions of the Indian Penal Code for allegedly being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 riots in the national capital, which had left 53 people dead and over 700 injured.

The violence had erupted during the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Umar Khalid *PHOTO: PTI*

On 28 May, the trial court had rejected Khalid's plea seeking regular bail for the second time, saying its previous order dismissing his first bail application had attained finality. On 18 October, 2022, the High Court had upheld the dismissal of the first bail plea and said the city police's allegations against him are prima facie true. *—PTI*

Ex-serviceman kills 6 family members in Ambala including 3 kids

AMBALA, 22 JULY

An ex-serviceman allegedly hacked to death six members of his family, including his mother, a nephew and two nieces, in Naraingarh here over a land dispute, police said on Monday. The incident occurred in Rator village of Naraingarh on Sunday night, they said.

The retired soldier Bhushan Kumar allegedly brutally killed the five family members and injured his father with an axe while they were asleep, the police said.

He also tried to burn the bodies after committing the crime, they added.

Preliminary investigation suggested that an alleged land dispute between the two brothers led to the incident, the police said.

The deceased are Kumar's mother Saroopi Devi, 65; brother Harish Kumar, 35; sister-in-law Sonia, 32 and their two children – Pari,7; Yashika, 5, and Mayank,6 months.

The father of the accused, Om Prakash, who was also injured in the attack, is undergoing treatment at the Civil Hospital in Naraingarh, police said. On receiving information about the incident, Ambala's Superintendent of Police Surinder Singh visited the spot late in the night.

Police teams have been formed to arrest the accused who fled the spot after allegedly committing the murder.

These teams are raiding various places, the police said, adding that further probe in teh case is on. *—PTI*

Investigation suggested that an alleged land dispute between the two brothers led to the incident, the police said *REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE*

Nipah death: Boy ate fruit from bat-infested locality

KOZHIKODE, 22 JULY

The number of people at risk for contracting Nipah in the contact list of the 14-year-old boy who lost his life to the rare infection, has been increased to 350, out of which 101 are in the high-risk category, Health Minister Veena George said on Monday.

The Kerala Health Department is waiting for the test results of 13 people, whose samples were sent to the Kozhikode Medical College virology laboratory and the Advanced Virology Institute at Thiruvananthapuram for testing.

"Out of the samples sent for testing, six have symptoms. Three are on the secondary contact list. Even though the parents of the deceased boy do not have symptoms, we have sent their samples also for testing to rule out all possibilities," she said. The health department said two of the people on the contact list are from Palakkad, while four are from Thiruvananthapuram.

Meanwhile, the 14-year-old boy who died from Nipah infection had consumed a fruit from a nearby property in Pandikkad panchayat, where the presence of bats has been detected. *—PTI*

Migrant worker found living in dog kennel on rent in Kerala, probe ordered

T'PURAM, 22 JULY

The Kerala government on Monday ordered a probe after reports of a migrant worker living in a dog's kennel by paying rent in Ernakulam district surfaced.

Labour Minister V Sivankutty instructed the labour commissioner to submit a report in this regard.

"The Minister directed the Labour Commissioner to conduct an inquiry into the incident and submit a report," the minister's office said.

A section of media has reported about a migrant worker from West Bengal who was found living in an old kennel located on the premises of a house owned by a native of Piravom in Ernakulam district.

The labourer was reportedly staying in the kennel, which was converted into a room, for the last three months by paying a rent of Rs 500.

As the news spread, the police visited the spot and took the migrant worker for medical examination.

However, no further action was reportedly taken as the labourer declared that he preferred to stay in the old kennel on his own free will. *—PTI*

The labourer was staying in the kennel, which was converted into a room. He was paying a rent of Rs 500 *PHOTO: SALAR*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Kerala boy survives rare amoeba infection

KOZHIKODE, 22 JULY

Amidst concerns over the outbreak of deadly virus infections like Nipah in Kerala, the State on Monday reported a rare case of recovery from amoebic meningoencephalitis, which has a 97 per cent mortality rate.

State Health Minister Veena George announced that a 14-year-old boy undergoing treatment for the disease has recovered. She described this as a rare occurrence in the country, given the high mortality rate of the disease. Only 11 people worldwide have recovered from amoebic meningoencephalitis, George noted, praising the team that led the coordination and treatment efforts. A highly rare but extremely lethal central nervous system infection, amoebic meningoencephalitis, has been identified as a threat to human health. Caused by free-living amoebae, this deadly infection is typically contracted from freshwater sources such as lakes, rivers, and streams.

Health workers at the Primary Health Centre in Melady in this district suspected that the boy's symptoms might be meningoencephalitis. On 5 July, a special meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan led to instructions for molecular testing facilities to confirm the disease in its early stages. *—PTI*

RAIN HAVOCK

Rains batter Vidarbha, 700 houses damaged

NAGPUR, 22 JULY

More than 700 houses were damaged, and several roads were inundated as rains pummelled Maharashtra's Vidarbha over the weekend, and intermittent spells continued in the region on Monday.

In Chandrapur, seven gates of the Irai Dam were opened by one metre as incessant showers lashed the district in the morning.

According to officials, 740 houses were damaged, particularly in villages in Chandrapur, in the last 48 hours.

More than 100 people were evacuated from Asgaon (Paoni tehsil), Opara and Dholsar villages in Lakhandur tehsil of Bhandara district on Sunday night and shifted to temporary shelters.

Several locations in Mumbai received over 200 mm of rainfall in the 24 hours leading up to 8am on Monday, with the intense rain in the morning briefly disrupting local train services during the rush hour between Kalyan and Thakurli stations, causing delays.

Commuters pass through a waterlogged road after heavy rainfall, in Nagpur on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

Rain wreaks havoc in Nilgiris, schools shut

Rain wreaked havoc in the Nilgiris district uprooting trees, and causing power outages. The administration on Monday declared a holiday for schools in four taluks following heavy and incessant rains in the district.

Meanwhile, in Shimla, the National Highway-5 reopened for traffic early Monday after remaining blocked for four hours due to a landslide at Nigulsari in Kinnaur district, officials said.

The NH-5 or the Hindustan-Tibet Road connects Shimla and Kinnaur districts in Himachal Pradesh. *—PTI*

Clockwise from top: Water level of the Selaqui river rises after heavy rainfall, in Dehradun on Monday; People use raincoats, umbrella to shield themselves as rains batter Kolkata; People try to move a car after a road got blocked due to landslide following rains, in Shimla; People take shelter amid monsoon rains, in New Delhi *PHOTOS: PTI*

SAWAN JALABHISHEK

Devotees arrive to perform 'Jalabhishek' ritual on the first Monday of Sawan month, at Shree Gauri Kedareshwar Mandir in Varanasi
PHOTO: PTI

MODI'S NEW BUDGET FACES JOBS CRISIS TEST

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government will present its first federal budget following a narrow election victory.

A weakened Modi, reliant for the first time on coalition partners, is widely expected to usher in a reset in his spending policies, while maintaining fiscal prudence.

Analysts suggest the new government may need to focus more sharply on the rural majority, who have not benefitted as much as the wealthy from the country's rapidly growing GDP.

The fact that this is Modi's third term will preoccupy him with thoughts of leaving a lasting legacy and may "tempt" him to do something about economic prosperity for the masses, says Rathin Roy, a former member of the prime minister's Economic Advisory Council.

"It is the one area where his legacy will say he has conspicuously failed in the past."

In the 10 years that he's been in power, Modi has poured billions of dollars into state funded infrastructure, building sea bridges and expressways. He's also undertaken tax cuts for big corporations and launched subsidy schemes to incentivise exports-focused manufacturing.

India's shaky macro economy has stabilised and its stock markets have soared.

India's regional imbalances are also stark. A majority of the country lives in northern and eastern India where per capita incomes are lower than Nepal, and health, mortality and life expectancy worse than Burkina Faso, according to Roy.

Nine in 10 economists now say chronic joblessness is the biggest challenge confronting Modi 3.0. A post-election survey shows seven in 10 Indians support taxing the super-rich and eight in 10 economists believe growth has not been inclusive.

Travelling through northern India's agrarian heartland, the fate of its rural majority sticks out in sharp contrast with those living in its cities.

9 in 10 economists now say chronic joblessness is the biggest challenge confronting Modi 3.0
PHOTO: BBC NEWS

Muzaffarnagar in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh is barely a few hours away from the Indian capital, Delhi. Barring the state-of-the-art highway that cuts through the expansive open fields, it feels like a region that's been largely bypassed by the country's shiny economic boom.

"My income has gone down. The costs for inputs and labour have gone up but not for my crop," Pal said. "They only marginally increased procurement prices for cane before the elections.

Down the road from his field, an export-focused furniture workshop has seen its turnover drop by 80 per cent in the past five years as global orders dried up following a post-Covid sales bump.

Rajneesh Tyagi, the owner, said he would have liked to sell locally to mitigate the lull overseas, but continuing rural distress means there's no demand for his products.

"The farm economy is down and the biggest problem in growing local demand is high debt among the farmers and unemployment," he added. "They have no capacity to buy anything".

Tyagi's business represents a wide universe of micro enterprises that form the backbone of India's economy. India Ratings, a credit ratings agency, estimates 6.3 million enterprises have shut down between 2015 and 2023, costing 16 million informal jobs.

In contrast, profits reported by India's 5,000 listed companies rose sharply by 187 per cent between 2018 and 2023, spruced up in part because of tax cuts, according to commentator Vivek Kaul.

Bridging such gaping divides between the formal and informal parts of the economy and bringing prosperity to India's villages will be the biggest challenges for Modi as he embarks on a third term in office.

His first post-election budget may see a "tilt" towards welfarism though not necessarily a pivot away from more capital spending on big infrastructure projects, economists at Goldman Sachs said in a note.

A larger-than-expected dividend transfer from the central bank (0.3 per cent of GDP) will enable the government to boost welfare spending and maintain capex, with a focus on rural economy and job creation, says the Wall Street bank. Even those who manage money for some of India's wealthiest concur with this view.

Rajesh Saluja, CEO and managing director of ASK Private Wealth, says poverty reduction will most likely be on the government's budget agenda and it can be done "without upsetting the fiscal math", given the strong revenues and tax collections.

But economists warn more cash handouts are a poor substitute for real reform-led development. About 800 million Indians already live on free grain and some states spend close to 10 per cent of their revenues on schemes.

The budget will have to lay out a vision for how the government plans to put millions into the workforce and create earning potential.

"The reduced footprint of the unorganised sector has implications for employment generation. Therefore, a judicious mix of policy which allows coexistence of both formal and informal sectors needs to be pursued in the interim," says Sunil Kumar Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings.

India should also incentivise low-end, labour intensive manufacturing in sectors such as textiles and agri-food processing to address its massive domestic demand, Roy says.

Economists at India's largest bank SBI have suggested extending production-linked incentives Modi has offered to exports-oriented sectors to small enterprises.

"So far, when we think of manufacturing, we are thinking of posh people. We are thinking of supercomputers. We are thinking of getting Apple to come and make a few iPhones here," Roy said.

"These are not things that 70 per cent of India's population consumes. We should produce in India what 70% of India's population wants to consume. If I'm able to make 200-rupee ($2.4, £1.8) shirts in this country and not let that import demand leak to Bangladesh and Vietnam, it will boost manufacturing." *—BBC News*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

Kamala Harris- Many identities of 1st Vice-Prez

Less than four months out from the election, Vice-President Kamala Harris found herself in a difficult position.

President Joe Biden's poor performance on the debate stage spurred mounting criticism about his ability to win the election. As anxiety turned to tension within the Democratic party, her name rose up the list of replacement candidates.

With Biden's announcement that he will be ending his campaign and putting his support behind her, Harris has finally reached a position she'd long sought: the top of the Democratic ticket, and potentially the presidency.

But the journey there has been fraught and full of difficult questions, especially in recent months.

In the 24 hours after the debate debacle, Harris chose strong loyalty to Biden.

The vice-president spoke on CNN, MSNBC and at a campaign rally. She defended her political partner's record and attacked their opponent, former President Donald Trump.

How Kamala rose to become VP

Just five years ago, Harris was the senator from California hoping to win the Democratic nomination for presidency.

She began her career in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office and became the district attorney - the top prosecutor - for San Francisco in 2003, before being elected the first woman and the first black person to serve as California's attorney general, the top lawyer and law enforcement official in America's most populous state.

She launched a nationwide "Fight for Reproductive Freedoms" tour advocating for women to have the right to make decisions about their body. She highlighted harm caused by abortion bans and called on Congress to restore the protections of Roe v Wade after the Supreme Court's conservative justices overturned the constitutional right to abortion in 2022.

Harris set a new record for the most tie-breaking votes cast by a vice president in the history of the Senate. Her vote helped pass the Inflation Reduction Act and the American Rescue Plan, which provided Covid relief funding including stimulus payments.

The many identities of Kamala Harris

Born in Oakland, California, to two immigrant parents - an Indian-born mother and Jamaican-born father - her parents divorced when she was five and she was primarily raised by her Hindu single mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris, a cancer researcher and civil rights activist.

She grew up engaged with her Indian heritage, joining her mother on visits to India, but Harris has said that her mother adopted Oakland's black culture, immersing her two daughters - Kamala and her younger sister Maya - within it.

"My mother understood very well that she was raising two black daughters," she wrote in her autobiography The Truths We Hold. "She knew that her adopted homeland would see Maya and me as black girls and she was determined to make sure we would grow into confident, proud black women."

Her biracial roots and upbringing mean she embodies and can engage with and appeal to many American identities. Those parts of the country which have seen rapid demographic change, enough change to alter a region's politics, see an aspirational symbol in her.

The making of witty 'debate club' Kamala

From the very earliest, as her friend Ms Rosario-Richardson attests, she showed the skills that allowed her to be one of few women to break through barriers. Wit and humour is part of that armoury. In a video posted to her social media in 2020 after winning the election, she shares the news of the win - with a very hearty laugh - with Biden: "We did it, we did it Joe. You're going to be the next president of the United States!"

The laugh she greeted the then president-elect with, when making that first momentous phone call, was one her friend recognised immediately and intimately.

Kamala, 'Momala', history-maker

In 2014, then-Senator Harris married lawyer Doug Emhoff and became stepmother to his two children.

She wrote an article for Elle magazine in 2019 about the experience of becoming a stepmother and unveiled the name that would then come to dominate many headlines that followed.

"When Doug and I got married, Cole, Ella, and I agreed that we didn't like the term 'stepmom'. Instead they came up with the name 'Momala'."

They were portrayed as the epitome of modern American "blended" family, an image the media took to and one that occupied many column inches about how we talk about female politicians.

Many argue she should also be seen and recognised as the descendant of another kind of family and that is the inheritor of generations of black female activists. "Her win is historic but it is not hers alone. *—BBC News*

As anxiety turned to tension within the Democratic party, Kamala Harris rose up the list of replacement candidates
PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Why are Indians mad for momos? What is the Momo effect?

Sonakshi Verma, a college student, pushes her way to order a plate of momos from a corner shop on a busy market street in New Delhi. The noisy shop, which opens only in the evenings, is crowded with people eagerly anticipating their first bites of one of India's most popular street foods.

"Ek plate veg momos, bhaiya [please give me a plate of vegetarian momos, brother]," Verma says, trying to get her voice heard above the crowd.

When Verma gets her plate, she walks to a table and looks longingly at the four soft, plump dumplings nestled beside some chutney and mayonnaise.

She delicately dips one momo in the red chilli chutney, closes her eyes, breathes deeply and takes a bite. The tender outer layer tears, giving way to the savoury filling: a delicious mixture of sharp onion and garlic and spicy umami flavour. After eating two, she pauses before telling me: "I am fighting the craving to eat and at the same time just be comforted with their presence."

I look around at the crowd of mostly students and young adults. At another table, a small girl sitting with an older woman spots a man and boy heading towards their table and shouts: "Dadi momo mil gaye! [Grandma we got the momos!]" Soon, the family are devouring two plates of the popular snack.

Momos are a steamed or fried variety of dumplings: dough-wrapped pockets of spiced vegetables or meat, served with a variety of sauces, gravies and condiments. After making their way to India, the simple and satisfying snack has become a favourite throughout the country, whether as a comfort food or celebratory dish.

Momos are dumplings; not all dumplings are momos

Not much is known about the origin of the humble momo. "Momo has always been a part of the Himalayan region," explains Kurush F Dalal, an archaeologist and culinary anthropologist. "Almost all the communities that live across the middle and higher Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau have all made dumplings that we call momos today." The tradition of dumplings stretches from Europe to China, he adds.

However, he offers this important caveat: "Every single momo is a dumpling, but every single dumpling is not a momo." Momos are a subclass of dumplings.

The dumpling difference comes down to the casing and the fillings. Dumplings (dim sums in particular) use a combination of flours – like rice, potato starch or cornstarch – for the dough. When it comes to the fillings, dumplings have been elevated to an art form with endless options, explains Rushina Munshaw-Ghildiyal, a culinary expert and corporate food consultant. Momos on the other hand are more rustic. The dough is made from all-purpose flour, which makes the momos appear more opaque, and fillings typically include a base of ginger, garlic and onions.

Momos has become a favourite throughout the country, whether as a comfort food or celebratory dish
PHOTO: PIXABAY

Dalal suspects that momos originated in Tibet – "momo" is a Tibetan word. However, the trans-Himalayan food is also eaten in Nepal, Bhutan, and the Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh states of India. "Food travels the same highways as trade does. As traders travel. their food travels with them," says Dalal. The Newari community of Nepal have been trading with the Tibetans for centuries. Their momos tend to be filled with lamb and mutton.

The momo takes over India

Momos arrived in Kolkata with Tibetan refugees who fled China in 1960, Dalal explains. In the previous year, the Dalai Lama escaped to India. Today, the country is home to the world's largest Tibetan diaspora, an estimated 80,000 people.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, momos became very popular in Delhi and Kolkata. Doma Wang, who came to Salt Lake, Kolkata, more than 30 years ago, was inspired by an elderly woman who sold momos from her home, and began doing the same in 1992 before opening the Blue Poppy Restaurant in 2005. Wang became so popular that she was dubbed "The Momo Queen of Kolkata" by her momo-mad patrons.

Indians, however, initially found momos too bland, explains Vipul Yadav, a brand manager who conducts food heritage walks in Mumbai. He recounts a second-hand story: When Dolma Tsering – known as Dolma Aunty, a native of Tibet – opened one of the first momo stalls in Lajpat Nagar in 1994 in New Delhi, there were very few buyers.

A momo is incomplete without the red chutney, Wang explains, which is prepared by soaking dry red chillies in oil and grinding them with a little salt.

Making the perfect momo

Momos are sold on steamer carts, in corner shops and small restaurants. Most of these shops are set up in the evenings and cater for a few hours. Typically, the snacks are eaten while standing, however, a few shops have tables and chairs for people to sit. You can expect to get a wide variety of momos in almost every Indian city and some villages, and they're almost always served with chutneys and mayonnaise

Traditionally, momos are made from all-purpose flour kneaded with cold water and stuffed with meat. However, during the Buddha Jayanti (Buddha's birthday) month, Tibetans eat vegetarian momos made with cabbage, onions, ginger, salt and maybe some churpi (yak cheese) as the filling, Wang explains.

The secret of making a perfect momo is its skin. "It should neither be too thick nor too thin," Wang explains. Thin dough breaks and thick dough doesn't taste good. The meat-to-onion ratio is key to the best-tasting momo filling.

The momo effect

Momos are popular because they're tasty, but also because they are cheap. A plate of six momos costs about 60-90 rupees ($0.72 – $1.07), making it a satisfying, pocket-friendly option.

Of course, the "tactile satisfaction a hot momo offers when eaten at the end of a day could be the main cause of its popularity as a street food", says Ghildiyal. People relish that first bite when the outer casing mingles with the savoury filling as the hot chutney explodes in the mouth when the zest of garlic and chillies coats the tongue.

—Al Jazeera

BLACK WOMEN MOBILISE FOR HARRIS

Kamala Harris' network of backers includes a number of key Black female Democratic allies

WASHINGTON, 22 JULY

Thousands of Black women from across the US have held an online discussion on the path forward to support Vice President Kamala Harris after President Joe Biden dropped out of the race and endorsed her.

Harris, who received Biden's support to become the next Democratic presidential nominee, is poised to become the first Black woman and first Asian American to lead the ticket of a major American political party.

Harris, 59, said she was "honoured" to receive Biden's endorsement and intends to "earn and win" the nomination of the Democratic Party.

Her network of backers includes a number of key Black female Democratic allies who have been quietly organizing for weeks to ensure that she would be well positioned to lead the ticket if Biden stepped aside.

Those women held a Zoom call Sunday evening after Biden announced his decision to withdraw from the race. Win with Black Women periodically holds Zoom calls, but this one had a different tone and tenor given Biden's announcement and subsequent endorsement of Harris, CNN reported.

Longtime Democratic operative Donna Brazile said that she was in the process of gathering delegates to support Harris.

Vice President Kamala Harris embraces President Joe Biden after a speech on healthcare in Raleigh, NC *PTI*

Indian Americans welcome Harris

Several prominent Indian Americans on Sunday welcomed the prospect of Vice President Kamala Harris becoming the Democratic Party's presidential nominee and described it as a historic moment for this small ethnic community.

Harris, 59, on Sunday announced that she will run for presidency after her boss President Joe Biden announced that he would not seek re-election in the November general elections and instead endorsed her to be the party's nominee. Harris was soon endorsed by several top Democratic leaders. *—PTI*

> **I know that, as he has done throughout his remarkable career, he will have made his decision based on what he believes is best for the American people**
>
> Keir Starmer, British Prime Minister

> **The Australia-US Alliance has never been stronger with our shared commitment to democratic values, international security, economic prosperity and climate action for this and future generations**
>
> Anthony Albanese, Australian Prime Minister

> **I've known Biden for years. He's a great man, and everything he does is guided by his love for his country. As President, he is a partner to Canadians— and a true friend. To Biden and the First Lady: thank you**
>
> Justin Trudeau, Canadian Prime Minister

> **Many strong decisions have been made in recent years and they will be remembered as bold steps taken by Biden in response to challenging times. And we respect today's tough but strong decision**
>
> Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Ukrainian President

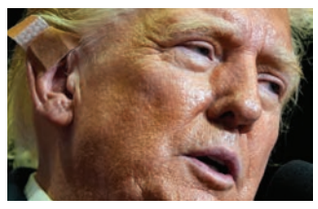
Global shares tumble after Biden quits

HONG KONG, 22 JULY

European markets opened with gains Monday after President Joe Biden exited the 2024 race, while Asian shares mostly fell. Germany's DAX rose 0.8 per cent to 18,311.32 in early trading and the CAC 40 in Paris gained 0.8% to 7,596.64. In London, the FTSE 100 added 0.5 per cent to 8,194.82. In Asian trading, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 slipped 1.2 per cent to 39,599.00. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong added 1.3 per cent to 17,635.88 and the Shanghai Composite index dropped 0.6% to 2,964.22 after China's central bank unexpectedly lowered its one-year benchmark loan prime rate, or LPR, which is the standard reference for most business loans, to 3.35 per cent from 3.45 per cent. The People's Bank of China cut the five-year loan prime rate, a benchmark for mortgages, to 3.85% from 3.95 per cent, aiming to boost slowing growth and break out of a prolonged property slump. *—AP*

Trump slams Biden for ending re-polling campaign

WASHINGTON, 22 JULY

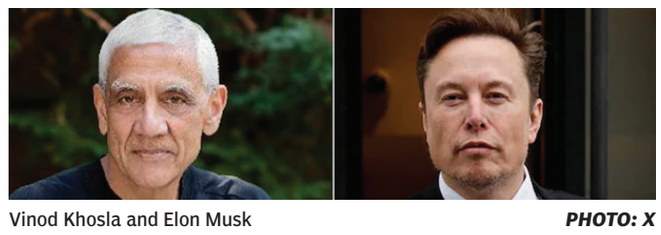


Donald Trump *PHOTO: PTI*

Republican Presidential nominee Donald Trump hit out at incumbent US President Joe Biden for ending his reelection campaign and claimed that "everybody around Biden, including his doctors, knew that he was not capable of running for or being president".

His scathing remarks came after Biden, 81, in a stunning decision on Sunday, announced that he was withdrawing from the race to be the next president in 2024 and endorsed Harris, who is of both Indian and African origin, as the Democratic Party's new nominee. Biden's decision to nominate Harris (59) follows weeks of intense pressure from fellow Democrats after his disastrous presidential debate performance against his Republican rival and ex-US president Donald Trump. Trump said, "So we are forced to spend time and money on fighting Crooked Biden, he polls badly after having a terrible debate, and quits the race." *—PTI*

Khosla, Musk argue over Trump's candidature



Vinod Khosla and Elon Musk *PHOTO: X*

NEW YORK, 22 JULY

Tech billionaire Elon Musk and Indian-American venture capitalist Vinod Khosla were engaged in a war of words on Monday over Donald Trump's candidature for the US presidency. Trump, 78, on Thursday night accepted his Republican Party's nomination for a third consecutive presidential bid. On the other hand, incumbent President Joe Biden,81, on Sunday withdrew from the presidential race, following mounting pressure from Democrats after a faltering debate performance against Republican candidate Trump last month. Biden has endorsed Kamala Harris, the current vice president, to be the new Democratic nominee.

Khosla said that it is hard for him to support someone like Trump, a Republican, who has "no values, lies, cheats, rapes, demeans women", and "hates immigrants" like him.

"He may cut my taxes or reduce some regulation but that is no reason to accept depravity in his personal values. Do you want President who will set back climate by a decade in his first year?" he asked. *—PTI*

Woman stabbed at Miami Int'l Airport, 1 held

MIAMI, 22 JULY

A woman sustained critical injuries in a stabbing incident at Miami International Airport late Saturday evening, CNN reported, citing the Miami-Dade Police Department. The incident led to evacuations of two concourses, though normal airport operations have since resumed, according to a news release issued Sunday morning around 11.30pm on the fourth floor of Terminal J. The suspect, a male, allegedly stabbed the victim multiple times and tried to throw her over the railing, the release stated. The suspect was taken into custody at the scene and also recovered a knife from him. The injured victim was transported by Miami-Dade Fire Rescue to Jackson Memorial Hospital's Ryder Trauma Centre in critical condition, CNN reported. Meanwhile, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) noted a decline in unruly passenger incidents, with over 2,000 reported in 2023, a 15 per cent decrease from the previous year. *—ANI*

5 shot dead at elderly care home in Croatia

ZAGREB, 22 JULY

An assailant entered an elderly care home on Monday in central Croatia and shot five people dead, Croatian media reports said. The Index news portal said five people died immediately, while others were still receiving medical assistance. The suspect fled the scene, but the police soon caught him in a cafe near the facility in the town of Daruvar, the report said. Authorities are investigating the motive behind the attack. *—AP*

Seven rooms of the school were razed to the ground in the blast
PHOTO: X/SCREENGRAB

Militants blow up govt girls' school in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, 22 JULY

Unidentified militants blew up a government girl's school in a tribal district in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Monday, officials said.

There was, however, no loss of life in the explosion. The militants blew up the Govt Girls Middle School in North Waziristan tribal district, bordering Afghanistan, on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Minister Faisal Khan Tarakai said.

Seven rooms of the school were razed to the ground in the blast.

A total of 255 girls were enrolled in the school. Tarakai said the school would be made functional soon. "Such cowardly acts cannot deter our resolve of education promotion in tribal areas. Provision of education is the top priority of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government," he said.

The Taliban and its component bodies are opposed to female education and held it as un-Islamic.

In a similar incident in May, a private girls' school was blown up by unidentified militants in Tehsil Shewa of North Waziristan district. *—PTI*

Internet is still down in Bangladesh

DHAKA, 22 JULY

Internet and mobile data services are still down despite apparent calm in Bangladesh following a verdict that scaled back a controversial quota system for government jobs after weeks of relentless protests that turned deadly.

The government has also declared Monday a public holiday, with only essential services running. This comes after a curfew with a shoot-on-sight order was installed days earlier and military personnel could be seen patrolling the capital and other areas.

The South Asian country witnessed clashes between the police and mainly student protesters demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971.

Bangladeshi military forces soldiers on armored vehicle patrol in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

The violence has killed more than a hundred people, according to at least four local newspapers. Authorities have not so far shared official figures for deaths. On Thursday, communications were cut off as tensions escalated.

There was no immediate violence reported on Monday morning after the Supreme Court ordered the veterans' quota to be cut to 5 per cent, with 93 per cent of jobs allocated on merit, the day before.

Some student protesters urged the government to restore internet services. Hasnat Abdullah, a coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, told the Associated Press that they were withdrawing their calls for a complete shutdown, which they attempted to impose last week.

Students have also demanded some university officials to step down after failing to protect campuses. Sarjis Alam, another coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, said that they would continue with their protests if all their demands weren't met. *—PTI*

Imran Khan's PTI's Info Secy held

ISLAMABAD, 22 JULY

The police on Monday arrested jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Information Secretary Rauf Hasan in a raid at the party's central secretariat here, stepping up the crackdown on Opposition. Initially, it was reported that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Gohar Ali Khan was also arrested but PTI spokesperson Zulfi Bokhari rejected the report about Khan's arrest while confirming that Hasan had been arrested. *—PTI*

Israeli strikes kill 15 including children

DEIR AL-BALAH, 21 JULY

Israeli airstrikes killed at least 15 people, including women and children overnight in Gaza, according to hospital officials and a body count by an Associated Press journalist on Sunday.

The latest strikes occurred as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu prepared to leave Monday for the United States, where he is expected to meet with President Joe Biden and address Congress to make his case for the nine-month war against Hamas while ceasefire negotiations continue. A team will be sent to continue talks on Thursday, Netanyahu's office said.

The already precarious humanitarian conditions inside besieged Gaza have worsened with the discovery of the polio virus as water and sanitation services have suffered for the territory's population of 2.3 million, most of it displaced. According to Gaza's Health Ministry at least 39,000 Palestinians have now been killed in the war, . Israel's latest airstrikes were in the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza, where nine people, including two children, were killed, and the southern city of Khan Younis, where at least six people were killed, including two girls. *—AP*

Israel orders evacuation of part of Gaza's Khan Yunis

DEIR AL-BALAH, 22 JULY

The Israeli military on Monday ordered the evacuation of part of an area in the Gaza Strip it has designated a humanitarian zone. The military said it is planning to begin an operation against Hamas militants who have embedded themselves in the area and used it to launch rockets toward Israel. The area includes the eastern part of the Muwasi humanitarian zone, which is located in the southern Gaza Strip. Many Palestinians have been uprooted multiple times. *—AP*

LOOKING FOR A SAFE SHELTER

3,000 migrants leave Southern Mexico

CIUDAD HIDALGO, 22 JULY

Migrants walk along the highway through Suchiate, Chiapas state in southern Mexico *PHOTO: AP*

About 3,000 migrants from around a dozen countries left from Mexico's southern border on foot on Sunday, as they attempt to make it to the US border.

Some of the members of the group said they hoped to make it to the US border before elections are held in November, because they fear that if Donald Trump wins he will follow through on a promise to close the border to asylum-seekers.

The group left on Sunday from the southern Mexican town of Ciudad Hidalgo, which is next to a river that marks Mexico's border with Guatemala.

Some said they had been waiting in Ciudad Hidalgo for weeks, for permits to travel to towns further to the north.

Migrants trying to pass through Mexico in recent years have organised large groups to try to reduce the risk of being attacked by gangs or stopped by Mexican immigration officials as they travel. But the caravans tend to break up in southern Mexico, as people get tired of walking for hundreds of miles. Recently, Mexico has also made it more difficult for migrants to reach the US border on buses and trains. Travel permits are rarely awarded to migrants who enter the country without visas and thousands of migrants have been detained by immigration officers at checkpoints in the center and north of Mexico, and bused back to towns deep in the south of the country.

He criticized Trump's recent comments about migrants and how they are trying to "invade" the United States.

"We are not delinquents" he said. "We are hardworking people who have left our country to get ahead in life, because in our homeland we are suffering from many needs." *—AP*

MARKET SETTLES LOWER AHEAD OF BUDGET

Market was dragged down by selling pressure in Reliance Industries and Kotak Bank

Falling for the second day in a row, Sensex fell 102.57 points to settle at 80,502.08 and NSE Nifty dipped 21.65 points or 0.09 per cent to 24,509.25 *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Monday, dragged down by heavy selling pressure in Reliance Industries and Kotak Mahindra Bank ahead of the Budget.

Besides, a weak trend in global equity markets also hit investors sentiment, traders said.

Falling for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 102.57 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 80,502.08. During the session, it tanked 504 points or 0.62 per cent to 80,100.65.

The NSE Nifty dipped 21.65 points or 0.09 per cent to 24,509.25. During the day, it dropped 168.6 points or 0.68 per cent to 24,362.30.

Among the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries declined over 3 per cent after the company reported a 5 per cent drop in its June quarter net profit.

ITC, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies and IndusInd Bank were the other big laggards.

NTPC, UltraTech Cement, HDFC Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the gainers.

HDFC Bank climbed over 2 per cent after the company's consolidated net profit grew 33.17 per cent to Rs 16,474.85 crore in the June.

The BSE benchmark hit its new all-time high of 81,587.76 in the initial trade on Friday but failed to carry forward the winning momentum and tanked 738.81 points to settle below the 81,000 mark. *—PTI*

Reliance shares drop over 3%

Shares of Reliance Industries Ltd, India's most valuable company by market valuation, on Monday declined over 3 per cent after the company reported a 5 per cent drop in its June quarter net profit- The blue-chip stock dropped 3.38 per cent to Rs 3,004.25 on the BSE. At the NSE, it declined 3.44 per cent to Rs 3,003.25. The net profit was also 20 per cent lower quarter-on-quarter when compared to the record Rs 18,951 crore earnings. *—PTI*

WIPRO SHARES TANK NEARLY 9% TO ₹508.25

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Shares of IT major Wipro tumbled nearly 9 per cent in morning trade on Monday after the company gave a flat sequential growth guidance.

The stock tanked 8.79 per cent to Rs 508.25 on the BSE. At the NSE, it tumbled 8.79 per cent to Rs 508.20 apiece.

The stock emerged as the biggest laggard among the NSE Nifty firms.

The Q1 FY25 revenue of the Bengaluru-headquartered firm, however, fell 3.8 per cent to Rs 21,963.8 crore.

The company said it expects revenue from the IT Services business segment to be in the range of USD 2,600 million to USD 2,652 million, in the September quarter.

Wipro on Friday posted a 4.6 per cent year-on-year rise in consolidated net profit.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Gold rises ₹100 per 10 grams, silver plunges by ₹600

NEW DELHI, 21 JULY

Gold prices rose by Rs 100 to Rs 75,650 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday due to increased buying by jewellers and a firm trend in the overseas markets. However, silver prices plunged by Rs 600 to Rs 91,000 per kg. In the previous session, it had settled at Rs 91,600 per kg, as per the All India Sarafa Association. On Saturday, the precious metal rates had closed at Rs 75,550 per 10 grams. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also rose by Rs 100 to Rs 75,300 per 10 grams. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to fresh demand by local jewellers and a firm trend in the international markets. The white metal has declined Rs 3,400 per kg in the past four sessions since 18 July when it had fallen by Rs 400 to end at Rs 94,000 per kg. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 3 paise to close at 83.67 against US dollar

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range to settle 3 paise higher at 83.67 (provisional) against the American currency on Monday, as crude oil prices and the US dollar retreated from their elevated levels. Forex traders said the Indian rupee recovered from all-time low levels and traded in a narrow range as mixed-to-weak domestic markets put downside pressure on the rupee. However, weak tone in the US dollar and a decline in crude oil prices cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.66, and touched an intraday high of 83.65 and a low of 83.68 against the dollar during the trading session. It finally settled at 83.67 (provisional) against the American currency, registering a gain of 3 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee depreciated 7 paise to settle at its all-time low of 83.70 against the US dollar. *—PTI*

Fineotex Chemical raises ₹342.55 cr through shares

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

Fineotex Chemical Ltd, which manufactures speciality chemicals, on Monday said it has raised Rs 342.55 crore through the issue of equity shares and warrants on a preferential basis. In a regulatory filing, the company announced the closure of "fund raising of Rs 342.55 crore through a preferential allotment of equity shares and convertible warrants". "The cumulative funds raised from both tranches now total Rs 342.6 crore," Sanjay Tibrewala, CFO and Executive Director at Fineotex Chemical, said. "The capital raised will be invested strategically to support both organic and growth opportunities, commitment to enhance shareholder value. *—PTI*

Incuspaze raises $8 miilion to expand business

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Co-working firm Incuspaze has raised USD 8 million from investors, including India Inflection Opportunity Fund (IIOF), to expand business amid a rise in demand for flexible workspace. Incuspaze in a statement on Monday said this investment will significantly bolster its capabilities to provide premium flexible workspace to large enterprises, MSMEs and startups. The funds would help accelerate expansion plans and enhance service offerings to meet the evolving needs of clients, the company stated. Established in 2016, Incuspaze has a presence in 44 locations across 18 cities with a total portfolio of 30 lakh square feet. *—PTI*

Huge shift in capital expenditure likely in Union Budget: Experts

JAMSHEDPUR, 22 JULY

Union Budget will likely focus on expanding capital investment in several sectors, including infrastructure, construction, manufacturing and green energy, a professor of a top business school said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget in Parliament on Tuesday.

Over a period of time, the central government has increased capital expenditure by around 30 per cent every year, and this year, a massive shift is expected in this regard, said Dr Trilochan Tripathy, Professor of Finance at XLRI.

To achieve this growth target, Tripathy said there is a need for a broad-based allocation of resources across sectors.

Besides, Sitharaman is likely to formulate policies for private sector participation.

India is also well poised for development in the defence sector, with the government focusing on increased investment in sectors like ports, railways and aviation, said Tripathy, who is also an Assistant Dean at XLRI.

The Centre could offer incentives or tax breaks to private players for investment in defence production and supplies, as well as implement special schemes to attract MSMEs and startups for supporting the sector, he said.

According to him, the government's investment focus will also be on green hydrogen policy, green energy production and transmission, public digital platform development, high-tech manufacturing sectors like semiconductors and medical devices and artificial intelligence.

A comprehensive agricultural policy to make India self-reliant in foodgrain production might also be on the cards, the professor added. *—PTI*

GTRI: Don't cut import duty on smartphone

Economic think tank GTRI on Monday urged the government to cut import duty on smartphone components in the Budget as it could lead to an increase in superficial assembly plants that rely heavily on imported parts. "Do not cut import duty on smartphone components in this Budget.

Removing tariffs could lead to an increase in superficial assembly plants. Currently, import tariffs on the product is 20 per cent while duty on components range between 0 and 20 per cent. *—PTI*

Stock emerged as the biggest laggard among Sensex *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Kotak Bank shares drop 3%; mcap declines ₹12K cr

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank on Monday declined over 3 per cent after the firm reported a muted net profit growth on a standalone basis for the June quarter.

The bank's stock declined 3.30 per cent to finish at Rs 1,761.70 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 4 per cent to Rs 1,748.85.

At the NSE, shares of the firm dropped 3.24 per cent to Rs 1,762.45.

The company's market capitalisation (mcap) declined Rs 12,852.08 crore to Rs 3,49,302.92 crore.

The stock emerged as the biggest laggard among the BSE Sensex firms.

Kotak Mahindra Bank on Saturday reported a 79 per cent jump in consolidated net profit in the first quarter of the current fiscal to Rs 7,448 crore compared to the year-ago period, majorly helped by a stake sale in its general insurance arm, and the performance of subsidiaries.

- On a standalone level, the private sector lender's net profit grew 2 per cent to Rs 3,520 crore and the management conceded that the business restrictions imposed by RBI

On a standalone level, the private sector lender's net profit grew 2 per cent to Rs 3,520 crore, and the management conceded that the business restrictions imposed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) due to shortcomings on the technology front had an impact. *—PTI*

SANSTAR IPO SUBSCRIBED 13.47 TIMES ON DAY 2

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

The initial public offer of plant-based speciality products company Sanstar Ltd received 13.47 times subscription on the second day of share sale on Monday.

Rs 510-crore initial share sale got bids for 50,64,45,900 shares against 3,75,90,000 shares on offer, according to NSE data.

The category for non-institutional investors received 32.84 times subscription while the quota for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) got subscribed 12.14 times. The portion meant for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) fetched 1.29 times subscription.

The IPO has a fresh issue of up to 4.18 crore equity shares and an offer for sale of up to 1.19 crore equity shares.

The IPO has a price range of Rs 90-95 per share.

On Thursday, Sanstar Ltd said it has collected Rs 153 crore from anchor investors.

Sanstar is one of the major manufacturers of plant-based speciality products and ingredient solutions in the country.

The company's speciality products and ingredients add taste, texture, nutrients and increased functionality to foods as ingredients, thickening agents, stabilisers and sweeteners, among others.

—PTI

SEBI returns draft IPO docs of recruitment Crizac

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

SEBI has returned the draft documents of student recruitment solution provider Crizac Ltd, which was looking to float Rs 1,000 crore Initial Public Offering (IPO), an update with the markets regulator showed on Monday.

The move might delay the Kolkata-based company's initial share-sale.

The proposed IPO was entirely an Offer For Sale (OFS) by promoters, Pinky Agarwal and Manish Agarwal, with no fresh issue component.

The OFS consists of the sale of equity shares worth Rs 841 crore by Pinky Agarwal and up to Rs 159 crore by Manish Agarwal, according to the offer document.

The company filed its Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in April.

PHOTO: ANI

Crizac offers international student recruitment solutions to global institutions of higher education in the United Kingdom, Canada, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

Over the last three years, Crizac facilitated enrolment applications from over 72 countries through its registered agents on its technology platform. *—PTI*

LUOROCHEMICALS GETS SEBI'S NOD TO FLOAT IPO

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Refrigerants supplier Stallion India Fluorochemicals has received SEBI's go-ahead to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO), an update with the markets regulator showed on Monday.

The proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of up to 1.78 crore equity shares and an offer-for-sale (OFS) component of up to 43.02 lakh shares by its promoter Shazad Sheriar Rustomji.

The company is a supplier of refrigerants and various gases, catering to both bulk and small cylinder/container requirements. It has extensive experience in large-scale Fluorochemicals debulking bottling and distribution.

Sarthi Capital Advisors is the sole book-running lead manager. *—PTI*

JSW Energy bags 500MW solar project

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

JSW Energy on Monday said its subsidiary JSW Neo Energy has secured a contract to develop a 500 MW interstate transmission system (ISTS) connected solar project along with 250 MW/500 MWh of energy storage systems from Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI).

JSW Neo has received LoA for setting up 500 MW ISTS-connected Solar Power Project along with 250 MW/500 MWh of Energy Storage Systems from SECI against tariff based Competitive Bid invited for setting up of 1,200 MW ISTS-connected Solar Power Projects along with 600 MW / 1,200 MWh of Energy Storage Systems (Tranche XV), a company statement said.

The company aims to reach 20 GW generation capacity and 40 GWh of energy storage capacity before 2030 *PHOTO: ANI*

JSW Neo has also received a Letter of Award (or LoA) from Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Ltd (KREDL) for setting up a 300 MW solar project at Pavagada Solar Park, Karnataka, the company said in a separate statement.

The company expects to have an installed generation capacity of 10 GW by FY25, up from 7.5 GW at present.

The company aims to reach 20 GW generation capacity and 40 GWh of energy storage capacity before 2030. *—PTI*

UCO Bank Q1 net profit jumps 147% to ₹551 crore

KOLKATA, 22 JULY

State-owned UCO Bank on Monday reported a 147 per cent year-on-year jump in net profit to Rs 551 crore in the April-June quarter.

The lender's bottomline in the corresponding period a year ago stood at Rs 223 crore. Operating profit in the reporting quarter was Rs 1,321 crore, registering a growth of 9.81 per cent year-earlier period.

The Kolkata-based bank's total business grew 11.46 per cent on-year to Rs 4,61,408 crore, while gross advances increased 17.64 per cent to Rs 1,93,253 crore, it said in a statement.

Total deposits rose 7.39 per cent year-on-year to Rs 2,68,155 crore in three months.

Advances in retail, agriculture and MSME (RAM) sectors were up 18.65 per cent at Rs 1,01,986 crore, it said.

The bank also managed to reduce its Gross NPA in April-June by 116 basis points to 3.32 per cent, while net NPA declined by 40 basis points to 0.78 per cent. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@UCOBANKCARE

MICROSOFT ON TRACK

Crowdstrike says devices are back online

UNITED STATES, 22 JULY

Cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike says "a significant number" of devices that were impacted by a global IT outage on Friday are now back online.

In a social media post, the company - whose faulty security update caused Microsoft Windows computers to crash around the world - added it "continues to focus on restoring all systems".

Microsoft has estimated that the incident, which is being described as one of the worst IT outages in history, impacted 8.5 million computers around the world.

Businesses, banks, hospitals and airlines were among the worst-hit, with some still struggling to fully restore their systems.

"We understand the profound impact this has had on everyone. We know our customers, partners and their IT teams are working tirelessly and we're profoundly grateful," CrowdStrike said.

The firm also said it is deploying a new fix that it hoped would speed up the recovery of computer systems.

The massive outage has put a spotlight on the vulnerability of global computer networks, showing how a single glitch can cause global chaos.

According to CrowdStrike's website, it has 29,000 customers around the world, including some of the biggest companies in the US.

—BBC News

Around 8.5M computers around the world were impacted *PHOTO: PTI*

England defeat West Indies by 241 runs, seals series

NOTTINGHAM, 22 JULY

West Indies collapsed in the evening session as England won the second Test by 241 runs with rookie spinner Shoaib Bashir taking 5-41 after hundreds from Joe Root and Harry Brook set up the series-clinching win at Trent Bridge. Root (122) and Brook (109), the long-reigning king of England's batting unit and his heir apparent, reeled off classy centuries to pave the way for a sprint to victory on the fourth evening of the Test. England took an insurmountable 2-0 lead in the three-test series. Chasing an unlikely target of 385 after England's second-innings 425 all out, the tourists were demolished for 143 in just 36.1 overs as Bashir did the damage. Bashir removed Kirk McKenzie, Kavem Hodge and Alick Athanaze in the space of three overs to derail the tourists before cleaning up Jason Holder and last man Shamar Joseph. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Mumbai City FC sign Supratim Das for three years

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

Mumbai City FC on Monday announced the signing 19-year-old midfielder **Supratim Das** on a three-year contract which will keep him at the club till Indian Super League (ISL) 2027. Das is known for his technical abilities, game awareness and "excels at holding the ball under pressure and delivering incisive passes as a midfielder", the club said in a statement. Das, who is from the Reliance Foundation Young Champs, played a crucial role in winning the sub-junior I-League title in the 2018-2019 season and in their runner-up finish in the MFA Super Division League during the 2022-23 season. He also participated in the Reliance Foundation Development League 2022-23 and 2023-24 and earned qualification for the Premier League Next Gen Cup in 2023. —*PTI*

Kerala, TN clinch easy wins in Sub-jr Hockey C'ships

KOLLAM, 22 JULY

Hockey Kerala and the Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu registered convincing wins in the second Hockey India Sub-Junior Men & Women South Zone Championship here on Monday. In the men's section, Tamil Nadu defeated Telangana Hockey 11-1. Renjith (38', 40', 54', 55') led the attack for TN. Gowtham (4', 41', 52') scored a hattrick whereas Nithish J (25', 45') scored a brace. Krishna Mukil (12') and Nithish M (13') also scored a goal each. Sairam Chouhan (27') scored the consolation goal for Telangana. Kerala defeated Le Puducherry Hockey 7-0. Bahala Suraj (21', 26', 50', 56'), Aditya Lakra (52', 57') and Dinesh Minz (28') were their goal-scorers. Hockey Andhra Pradesh and Hockey Karnataka played out a 3-3 draw. In the women's section, Tamil Nadu defeated Telangana 8-0. Captain Jovian Defny Mj (9', 32', 44') led from the front. Kowsica S (8', 51'), Subika M (11'), Gopika R (41') and Harita J (59') also scored. —*PTI*

Everton's Onana seals £50M deal with Aston Villa

CHELSEA, 22 JULY

Aston Villa has signed midfielder Amadou Onana from Everton in a £50m deal. The 22-year-old played for Belgium in Euro 2024 campaign and now signed the opportunity to represent Villa in the new season's Champions League. Onana joined Everton from Lille for £33m in 2022 and made 72 appearances for the Toffees, scoring four goals. Villa boss Unai Emery has been in the market for a new defensive midfielder after the club sold Douglas Luiz to Juventus for £42.35m in June. They have not featured at that elite level since the 1982-83 season, the campaign after they won the European Cup. —*BBC News*

Gambhir backs Rohit, Kohli to play 2027 World Cup

He wants Rohit and Kohli to be available for most games

Indian men's cricket team head coach Gautam Gambhir and BCCI Chief selector Ajit Agarkar during a press conference in Mumbai on Monday ahead of the team's Sri Lanka tour PHOTO: PTI

MUMBAI, 22 JULY

India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Monday said he expects senior batters Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli to be available for most of the ODIs and Tests after retiring from T20 Internationals, expressing hope that they would "keep their fitness" to be in the reckoning for the 2027 50-over World Cup.

Gambhir also said he expects Rohit and Kohli to focus on their fitness keeping in my mind the 2027 ODI World Cup, slated to be held in South Africa.

However, they both were named in India's squad for next month's three ODIs in the island nation keeping in mind the Champions Trophy, which is slated for the first quarter of the next year.

> **Sometimes, just because we want headlines, it's not important. Right now, the most important thing is we both are going to be working extremely hard to make India proud. And that's our job**
>
> -Gautam Gambhir, India's Head Coach

Speaking to the media for the first time after being named India's head coach, Gambhir said, "I've said it before that workload management for someone like Jasprit Bumrah is important. For a batter, if they can play consistently, if they're in good form, might as well just play all the games," he said. "With Rohit and Virat are not playing T20 cricket, we only have two formats to look after. I'm sure they're going to be available for most of the games," he added.

"One thing I can be very clear of is that both of those guys have a lot of cricket left in them. More importantly with the Champions Trophy and a big tour of Australia coming up they will be motivated. Both Rohit and Kohli announced their retirement from the T20I format after India's World Cup win earlier this month and were expected to miss the upcoming tour of Sri Lanka. —*PTI*

My relation with Kohli is personal: GG

Mumbai, 22 July

India's newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir on Monday declared that his much talked about relationship with batting mainstay Virat Kohli "is between the two of us and not for TRPs", asserting that they are going to be "on same page" in the coming times. Kohli and Gambhir had not been the best of friends, something which was evident from the multiple confrontations between the two in the IPL. Ex-India all-rounder Abhishek Nayar and Netherlands batter Ryan ten Doeschate are joining as coaching staff for the Sri Lanka tour. —*PTI*

India register convincing wins in their first two matches of the continental tournament PHOTO: PTI

Women's Asia Cup: India eye for semifinal berth

DAMBULLA, 22 JULY

Buoyant India will look to extend their winning run and seal a semifinal berth when they face Nepal in their final Group A Women's T20 Asia Cup match here on Tuesday.

India registered convincing wins in their first two matches of the continental tournament, beating traditional rivals Pakistan and United Arab Emirates. Minnows Nepal hardly have any time to recover from the thrashing they received at the hands of Pakistan in their previous outing on Sunday. India have flexed their muscles in both batting and bowling so far in the tournament, and are likely to continue in the same vein come Tuesday.

While India are primed to enter the last-four, Pakistan improved their net run rate with the comfortable win over Nepal lifting them to the second spot in Group A.

- Minnows Nepal hardly have any time to recover from the thrashing they received at the hands of Pakistan in their previous outing on Sunday. India have flexed their muscles in both batting and bowling so far in the tournament, and are likely to continue in the same vein come Tuesday

India will, however, not be bothered by how the other teams are doing and will look to sustain the momentum they have gained with two convincing victories heading into the semifinals.

The Indu Barma-led Nepal, which started the tournament with a historic six-wicket victory over the UAE, is well aware of the task. —*PTI*

WINNING LIKE A SUPERMAN

Tour de France winner Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, celebrates as he crosses the finish line of the twenty-first stage of the Tour de France cycling race, an individual time trial over 33.7 kilometre with start in Monaco and finish in Nice, France PHOTO: PTI

JOURNEY WON'T BE EASY

Stimac's straight warning to football head coach Marquez

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Smarting from his unceremonious exit, former Indian football team head coach Igor Stimac on Monday warned his successor Manolo Marquez that the journey ahead "won't be easy" but backed the Spaniard to deliver the goods.

Stimac, who was part of Croatia's run to the semifinals of the 1998 World Cup, was sacked in June after India's failure to qualify for the third round of the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers despite getting a relatively easy draw.

Igor Stimac PHOTO: ANI

In a statement on Saturday, the AIFF said the 55-year-old Marquez will perform the dual role of managing the national team as well as the ISL franchise FC Goa in the 2024-25 season before taking up the India job on a full-time basis.

The tenure of Marquez, who is a UEFA Pro License holder, was not disclosed by the AIFF.

His first assignment as India head coach will be the Tri-Nation tournament in Vietnam in October. Lebanon is the third team.

Born in Barcelona, Marquez has been coaching in India since 2020.

He has managed two ISL clubs so far. His first stint was with Hyderabad FC (2020-23), before he switched over to FC Goa. He guided Hyderabad FC to the ISL Cup title in 2021-22. —*PTI*

PR Sreejesh announces that he will retire from international hockey after Paris Olympics PHOTO: PTI

It's the last dance for PR Sreejesh at Paris

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Veteran India hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh on Monday announced that he will bid adieu to the game after the Paris Olympics, ending a career that spanned 18 years during which he was a pivotal figure in some historic moments for the side.

The 36-year-old, a veteran of 328 International caps, including three Olympic Games, and multiple Commonwealth Games and World Cups, will be playing in his fourth Olympics in Paris beginning July 26. "As I prepare for my last dance in Paris, I look back with immense pride and forward with hope," Sreejesh said in a Hockey India press release.

"This journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I am forever grateful for the love and support from my family, teammates, coaches, fans and Hockey India. Thank you for believing in me.

After making his debut at the 2006 South Asian Games, Sreejesh was a part of various memorable wins for India, including a gold in the 2014 Asian Games and a bronze medal in the 2018 Asiad in Jakarta-Palembang.

He was also there in the Asian Champions Trophy-winning side in 2018, and the 2019 FIH Men's Series Finals champion team in Bhubaneswar. The affable keeper had a crucial role in the silver medal-winning team of the 2022 Commonwealth Games as well.

Sreejesh was one of the main architects of India's historic bronze medal win at the Tokyo Olympics and captain Harmanpreet Singh said the team will look to secure another medal at the Paris Games this time to make Sreejesh's last tournament a memorable one. —*PTI*

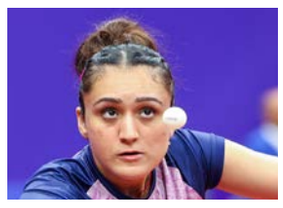
Not going to make mistakes like Tokyo: Batra

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Wiser after her maiden Olympics appearance in Tokyo, Indian table tennis star Manika Batra on Monday said she is focused on taking one match at a time in the upcoming Paris Games and a medal will not be in her mind in the initial rounds.

Preparing for the Paris Olympics along with her teammates, Batra said she has learned from her Tokyo Games experience. "I have learned many things from the last Olympics, and I am not going to make those mistakes again. My mindset has changed since then, I am calmer and have more confidence in myself," said Batra during an interview with Ultimate Table Tennis. "I have been working on my stamina and my agility, and my ultimate aim is to challenge for a medal.

Batra played an instrumental role in the women's team qualifying for the Paris Olympics, a first for Indian table tennis. —*PTI*



Manika Batra PHOTO: ANI

Women Hockey team trains at Indian Naval Academy

NEW DELHI, 22 JULY

Unarmed combat training, endurance runs and boat pulling were some of the elements of a first-ever "transformative training camp" that the national women's hockey team underwent recently at the Indian Naval Academy (INA), aimed at making the side mentally stronger, and more disciplined.

The unique camp was held at the INA in Kannur, Kerala, from 15 to 21 July. The women's hockey team is currently in a rebuilding phase after the heartbreak of failing to qualify for this month's Paris Olympics.

The camp, it is said, was designed to instill key values such as "team building, mental strengthening, risk capabilities, discipline, self-defence, survival techniques, and leadership skills."

Speaking about it, chief coach Harendra Singh said, "The Academy's dedication to mental strengthening and team bonding has transformed these young athletes into more competitive and resilient individuals." "The skills and discipline they have acquired here are invaluable. This experience has undoubtedly prepared our team to face any challenge on and off the field with renewed confidence and determination," he hoped.

Women's team PHOTO: X/@THEHOCKEYINDIA

Deputy Commandant Indian Naval Academy Rear Admiral Prakash Gopalan said, "This training camp was designed to provide them with a holistic development experience, focusing on mental toughness, discipline, and leadership. —*PTI*

THRILLING FINALE

Wehrlein crowned Formula E champion

LONDON, 22 JULY

Pascal Wehrlein of Porsche withstood relentless pressure from Mitch Evans and Nick Cassidy of Jaguar to win his maiden Formula E world championship at the season-ending London E-Prix here.

The dramatic conclusion unfolded on Sunday when Wehrlein's triumph exemplified Season 10's year of intense racing. The season finale saw three contenders – Wehrlein, Evans, and Cassidy – entering the final round separated by just seven points.

Cassidy, who led the championship going into the weekend, demonstrated remarkable resilience, rebounding from a disappointing performance in Portland and a challenging Saturday qualifying session in London.

Starting 15th in the first race, he managed to finish seventh, before earning pole position for the second race on Sunday morning.

Cassidy led the field as teammate Evans overtook Maximillian Gunther (Maserati) for second place at Turn 1. An early Safety Car period allowed Wehrlein to pass Gunther, placing all three title contenders in the top-three positions by Lap 6.

Pascal Wehrlein of Porsche poses for a photograph after winning the Formula E competition in London PHOTO: X/@FIAFORMULAE

Jaguar seemed to dominate, with their drivers battling for the championship. However, internal tensions surfaced during Cassidy's Attack Mode activations, with Evans and Cassidy jostling for position and Wehrlein capitalising on their discord.

- Oliver Rowland, starting from ninth, surged to fourth by Lap 29 and overtook Cassidy for third, triggering a collision with Gunther that ended Cassidy's race with a puncture

Oliver Rowland, starting from ninth, surged to fourth by Lap 29 and overtook Cassidy for third, triggering a collision with Gunther that ended Cassidy's race with a puncture.

This left the championship fight to Wehrlein and Evans as the Safety Car reappeared. With less than eight laps to go, both Evans and Wehrlein needed to activate their remaining Attack Mode boosts. —*PTI*